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THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

An Essay on Representative Democracy

BY

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Preface

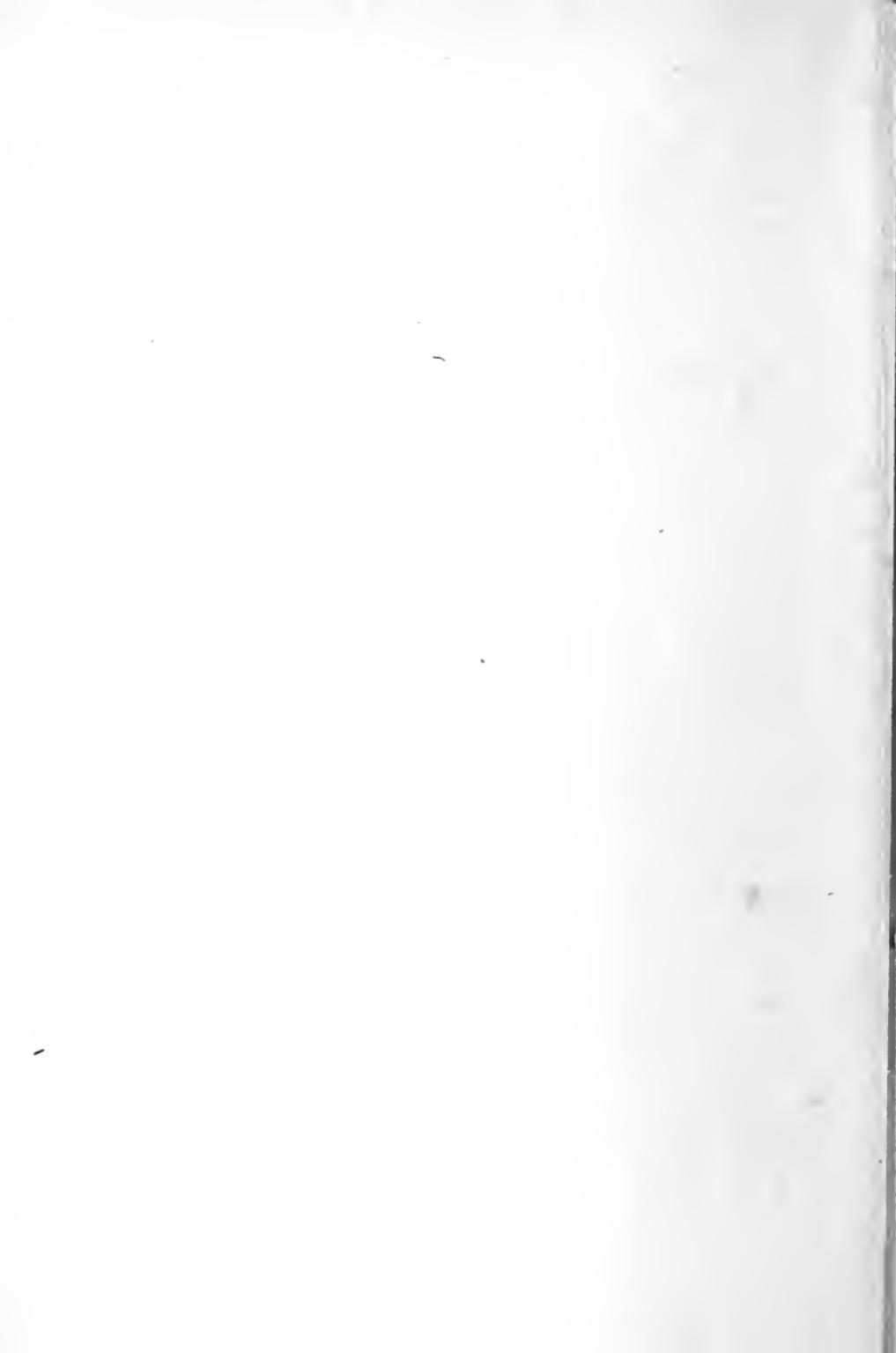
THIS essay was planned and partly written during the last year of the war in the intervals of military service in England. At that time the strain of the war, the complete suppression of democratic forms of government, and the strange incapacity of political leaders in all countries except America to formulate a programme worth fighting for, had produced much bitterness of feeling both within and without the British army. The mind turned with some relief to the consideration of parliamentary institutions as they existed in this country before the war and as they might exist again after it, perhaps with some inclination to magnify their possibilities and their superiority over the existing order. The precise question here proposed for investigation was no doubt influenced by the situation. I asked myself what this democracy, now so plainly absent, really was, and how far it was or might have been realized in the forms of government established in this country before the war. Later, after my release from military service, I had the advantage of submitting my attempt at an answer to these questions, in the form of lectures, to a Summer School of the Workers' Educational Association at Oxford. To its criticism and encouragement the essay owes much.

It seemed that a discussion which flourished so vigorously there might be not without interest to a wider public.

It is not yet at all clear in what direction our political institutions are likely to develop. Since this essay was completed, Mr. Lloyd George appears to have attempted to recreate the Cabinet ; but it is not certain how far the attempt has been either genuine or successful. Meanwhile many voices celebrate the approaching downfall of representative government and of the nation-state. To those whose sympathies are with such speculations it may seem that I have opened an unprofitable enquiry, into the possibilities of a system already condemned and now fortunately beyond revival. To me it seems certain, on the other hand, that the possibilities of representative government, so far from being exhausted, have hardly been tapped. Education is hardly yet fully within the reach of the ordinary voter, and adult suffrage is not yet realized. It does not of course follow that a different system, like Mr. Cole's "functional democracy," will not be tried or is not worth trying. But the power of human invention in these matters is very limited, not merely because of the limits of imagination, but still more because of the necessity of finding for the new creation a solid basis in custom and belief. In any case theory has to start from a criticism of existing institutions ; and to such criticism this essay is a modest contribution. No attempt is made to

prove that democracy is the best form or principle of government. The question is not even raised whether a better system of government could not be devised than the parliamentary system with which we are familiar. All that is asked is how, given those institutions or something very like them, the ideal of democracy might be brought somewhere near realization.

J. L. S.



CHAPTER I.

THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY.

ABSOLUTE liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty, is the thing that we stand in need of.

JOHN LOCKE. [Printed in capital letters at the end of his Preface to the English translation of the first letter on Toleration—1689].

Ce qui importe avant tout, c'est la continuité de l'action, c'est le perpetuel éveil de la pensée et de la conscience ouvrières. Là est la vraie sauvegarde. Là est la garantie de l'avenir. (What matters above all, is the continuity of action, the unbroken wakefulness of thought and conscience of the workers. That is the true safeguard. That is the guarantee of the future.)

JEAN JAURES. [His last written words ; the conclusion of an article published in *L'Humanité* over his initials on the day of his death, July 31st, 1914].

There may have been a time, long ago, when a king felt that his kingdom, with everything in it, land and houses and trees, men and all living things, was absolutely his own, to employ as he liked on whatever purpose might suit him. A large private landowner, even to-day, seems to have some such sense of absolute ownership. But through the largest estate run the king's highways, and its owner knows by many tokens that he is subject to the law of the land. The king's

ownership, therefore, of his realm may well have seemed to the king even more absolute. There was no outside check or limiting authority. Internal difficulties, setting limits to practicability, he must always have had; but his rights within his own realm—what was there to set a bound to them? If such a king promised this or that to his brother of France or Spain, it would be understood that he pledged himself to use whatever of his own resources should prove necessary for the fulfilment of the pledge. His realm and its citizens were his to employ as he thought fit, and his brother of France would count on them without question. If the English Rothschild promises to the French Rothschild help in a financial transaction, it is understood that the hundreds or thousands of clerks, agents, and assistants employed by the English firm will be used to whatever extent may prove necessary that the promise may be made good. It is Rothschild's office, and these men accept his pay and execute his orders. So this King of England, mythical or historical, would have reasoned if any question had been asked as to his resources. He was king, owner of a royal estate, and in promising he pledged the resources of a kingdom.

The loyal subject of such a king would know that he was the king's servant, and that only by giving up his birthright could he transfer into another's service. All that he held or owned he must hold ultimately from the king, who allowed

in certain cases sale or bequest to others, in other cases not. If he thought he was wronged, he would appeal to the king. The highest position to which a subject could aspire would be that he should be called to advise the king in the conduct of affairs or be entrusted with the execution of the king's orders or intentions in some portion of his realm or in some department of his household. A king's estate is large, and the owner cannot direct and supervise everything himself. Nevertheless there could be nothing done or suffered within the king's dominions for which the king could refuse responsibility. Crime, violence, love, friendship, marriage, childbirth—all happened by the King's "grace" or permission.

There may be a time, long after we are all dead, when a nation succeeds in ruling itself. Such a state of things is much more difficult to grasp in imagination than that of absolute kingship. But the main point is plain. Such a nation would be capable of a national act. If England and France were under absolute kings, as imagined above, the statement "England went to war with France" would only mean that England's King had quarrelled with the King of France and that the two kings were leading such of their retainers as they had been able to collect to do battle with one another. In the second case the war would be on each side a national act. Discontented minorities of each nation, greater or smaller, are still conceivable and even probable (just as a man will go

into a fight with some scruple at the back of his mind that he should have kept out of it): nevertheless the determination to fight would be that of the nations, the decision would be incontestibly theirs, and the conflict would be ended by a decision to discontinue fighting no less incontestibly national. Now there are persons and organizations authorized or accustomed to speak on behalf of nations. Von Bülow or Beaconsfield signs, and England or Germany has pledged her word. There are thus actions which purport to be the actions of nations. If the condition above imagined is realized, what will be achieved will be this—that which is in name a national act will be such in fact. This ideal is called democracy; and it must be understood that democracy is an ideal, not yet within reach of complete realization. It is a principle of government, and the chief test of its progress in any country is the degree to which an affirmative answer can be given to the question, “is this, which purports to be the national act, really the act of the nation?”

It is directly contrary to the idea of democracy that any man, or group of men, should have independent power and authority over the community, what we call the nation, since all power and authority, all place, position, and possessions, are conferred by, or by permission of, the nation. Hence a king as defined above is an impossibility; but how much further one can go is doubtful. Authorities and powers within the nation there

must be for the execution of the national will and for the coercion, when necessary, of unruly elements. The nature and limits of such authorities is a matter for subsequent enquiry: only one thing is immediately plain, namely, that all will be derivative and secondary. Hence, if in such a democracy there is a king, i.e., a hereditary, not elective president, his power, position, and authority will be known and limited. He will be a first citizen and will belong to the nation, not the nation to him. His function will be to express in his sphere, as any other citizen should in his, the national will.

The loyalty of the private citizen in a democratic state will be shown in the punctilious performance of all public duties, in which certainly all mature persons of both sexes will have a share. Decisions inevitably will go by majorities in some form or other, and the citizen's loyalty is most severely tested when he finds himself in the minority on a fundamental question. While kings with their courts produce a vertical graduation in society, so that the nearer a subject is to the king's person, as adviser, secretary-of-state, or court official, the higher is his social position, democracy gives no ready gauge of higher and lower. To some citizens a position of great political responsibility might be the highest ambition; to others other careers might seem to offer greater marks of distinction. In whatever sphere, however, the citizen worked, he could not

fail to be conscious that he was a citizen, working for the nation, and himself responsible in his degree for everything done or suffered within its territories. A national act would be in some degree his act. By mere opposition he could not rid himself of his responsibility for it ; but only in the last resort by renouncing his citizenship and migrating to another country.

The phrase "national act," used more than once above, requires explanation. To some it may appear a misty and metaphysical notion, devoid of meaning or value except to the professional philosopher, and doubtfully to him. But, though not free from difficulty, it is a simple notion when approached in the right way. Countries, indubitably, make treaties with one another, which when analysed are found to be undertakings or promises to act towards one another in certain specified ways : they make war and peace with one another ; again, actions and promises to act. Who are the agents in all this ? Not, certainly, simply the individuals who discuss, sign, or fight. Nor, perhaps, actually, in existing circumstances, fully at least, the nations concerned. Yet, ideally, without doubt, the nations. It is England that negotiates, promises, acts. The qualification, "ideally," means this. It is England that is meant and intended ; it is England that is actually involved ; but if England's "heart" is in it, that, as things now stand, is, for assignable reasons, in some degree an accident, whereas if the idea of

democracy were realized it would be a necessary element in the fact.

Countries, then, act in some measure ; and where they act they will : for will has no other expression but action, and action is the embodiment of nothing but will.

Only the decision of a capital issue can be conceived as being a national act in the full sense. In considering the record of a personal ruler, possessed of absolute power, we should have to distinguish among the acts for which he was responsible at least three main classes, each involving a different fashion and degree of responsibility, things done by himself, things done according to his orders or instructions, and things which he suffered men to do. The same wide distinctions are quite as necessary in considering the activities of the nation ; but they are there more difficult to apply ; for who can say when the nation, a vast and impalpable creature, is itself acting ; when others are acting according to its orders and instructions ; when they are merely doing what is tacitly allowed ? The chief difficulty probably lies for most people in determining the first class of cases : if that were clear, the other two would not present so much difficulty. Some immediate help, therefore, may usefully be here given towards the answer to the question, “ by what signs shall one know that the nation is itself acting ? ”

It is tempting to answer that one may know from the fact that practically all the citizens will be

doing something, relative to a national situation, which promises to have some influence upon the transformation of that situation, *e.g.*, casting a vote for a representative, or, in a referendum, for or against a particular proposal. But such an answer would limit the number of national acts very narrowly. It is difficult to imagine a constitution which would not exclude all declarations of war and conclusions of peace, as well as most treaties between nations, from the category of national acts, if the answer is allowed to stand. A safer and more constructive answer can be given on the following lines. There is one, and only one, condition, which can certainly be laid down as necessary. Practically all citizens must be taking note of the situation in which the country finds itself, and must have within reach full, timely, and accurate information as to any action taken, or proposed to be taken, in the country's name. This condition satisfied, and given a workable constitution, there is no reason why any decision taken on behalf of the nation by its properly accredited representatives should not be truly describable as a national act and truly embody the national will. If this condition is not satisfied, then the action, however accurately it may embody the wishes of the great majority or even the whole number of the citizens, cannot embody a national will (because no such will at the time it was performed can have existed) and cannot be truly described as a national act. It can only be the

action of an individual or individuals, which the country may, or may not, afterwards adopt as its own.

It might be objected to the view above advanced that in making the achievement of a national act depend, not on the power of the individual citizen to influence the decision of a matter in which national interests are involved, but on his attention to the situation in which his country finds itself, we have laid our foundation too wide. The condition, it might be said, is capable of realization as easily by a despotism or a bureaucracy as by what is ordinarily called a democratic government. The answer is that in practice men will not be persuaded to attend to affairs for which they are in no way responsible. It is only by making the ordinary citizen in some degree responsible for national affairs that you will induce him to attend to them. The country which most often calls on its citizens for a decisive vote is not necessarily the most democratic, or, what comes to the same thing, the most prolific in national acts ; but the country which never calls on its citizens for such decisions is shown by this test, as by any other, to lack the democratic principle altogether.

The condition laid down is clearly, in the most favourable circumstances, very difficult of realization. Only in a highly-educated community, very responsive to political influences and with a constitution exactly suited to it, is it capable of realization at all : and, even there, only on rare

occasions will it be realized. But then, it is only rarely that a national act of the first degree will be required. Most changes, especially legislative acts of Parliament, will be national acts in the second degree, the execution of a policy previously approved in general outline, with the detail of which only a small minority will be familiar.

Democracy is a principle of government at present only partially realized, and struggling everywhere for fuller realization. Its aim and effort is to make acts which are national in name national in reality. It attempts to secure this end by arranging for the widest possible co-operation of citizens in national affairs, thus demanding and encouraging their attention to public policy. In the final analysis it will probably be found that the democratic is the only real alternative to the kingly principle as outlined at the beginning of this chapter: certainly, it is its sworn enemy. In the one system ruler and subject is a natural division, embedded in the structure of society; in the other the functions of the ruler are so spread over the body politic that no citizen can disclaim either name. The one idea throws on a single head a responsibility to which no man is equal; while the other may seem to divide his power into parcels so small that any man will despise them. Does it not seem plain that these are two extremes, each as absurd and disastrous as the other, and that salvation is to be found, if anywhere, in some middle course?

But the signs of the times point inexorably to democracy, complete and unadulterated, as the future to which all civilized communities are moving. Not without opposition, it is true. Democracy has had to fight every yard of the way and is still openly assailed and flouted by those who are in a position to voice their dislike or distrust. The advocate of a "nation in arms" detests the idea of a nation in action. A nation of soldiers is all very well, but a nation of politicians is a hideous nightmare. Others foresee with disgust the inevitably levelling effect on society which a thoroughgoing political democracy is bound in the end to exert. Again, ground can easily be discovered in experience for the assertions that democratic methods of government are expensive, dilatory, inexpert, that democracies cannot conduct wars or maintain a steady external policy. Well, the faults observed in the half-democracies of the past and present may be variously explained. Want of education in the citizens and in their chosen advisers, want of balance or elasticity in the constitution, will account for much and enable us to shift some of the blame from the principle to its practice. And it can probably be shown that some of the most characteristic weaknesses imputed to existing democratic practice spring from the very fact that the principle is not completely realized. They are maladies of infancy, which, given a normal development, may be expected to disappear with maturity.

But when all is said and done, something will remain to the account of the principle itself. It has, no doubt, its own characteristic disorders. When the worst, however, has been admitted, the account against democracy will be a small and insignificant affair beside those of its more romantic and magnificent predecessors in power. It can never hope to compete with them in the fury of its frenzies or the malevolence of its malpractices.

It must be admitted that there is no guarantee that the democratic principle, if given full rein, will necessarily bring increased efficiency in government, or, in any obvious sense of the word, increased profit to a nation. A more natural life, an improved national health, friendlier dealings with fellow nations, these things perhaps we might promise; but even as it stands the promise is vague and the grounds of confidence are hard to define. Yet, after all, which is the greater or more feasible task? As a trusted leader to undertake the execution of a nation's will, or, as a benevolent despot, to labour to forestall its wishes?

To be a king's loyal servant is accounted a fine thing. The words have a romantic appeal not easily associated with work on a borough council or the expression of preferences on a voting paper. But romance of word does not easily cling to what is new and actual: it decorates the lost causes, the dying and the dead. It is not the romance of words but the romance of things that counts in our day. And that may spread even to the

borough council and the ballot box in a nation which finds the strength to cast off the last chains which bind it and stand forth free to go its own way. The will of a nation, could it but exist, would surely be something more stable, more calculable, and infinitely more powerful than the preferences of kings, the nervous coups of passing politicians, even than the secret and imperious behests of the magnates of trade, commerce, and international finance.

“Fine words!” it will be said, “but can you make them good?” The substance of these promises must be sought in what follows. It is only by developing carefully and in some detail the implications of the democratic idea that we can hope to gain any degree of clearness as to its power or value. Those who use the word, whether in praise or blame, too often show that they have no clear vision of the thing.

CHAPTER II.

THE ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THERE is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which sovereignty, or the supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community ; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general.

MILL : *Representative Government.* Ch. III.
[1861.]

Property inevitably confers power on its possessors, and far from adding to that national power by political privileges, it should be the object of all men who love liberty to balance it by raising the poorer classes to political importance ; the influence and insolence of riches ought to be tamed and subdued instead of being inflated and excited by political institutions.

NAPIER : *History of the Peninsular War.* Bk. XXIII., Ch. IV. [About 1835].

The pure idea of democracy, according to its definition, is the government of the whole people by the whole people, equally represented. Democracy as commonly conceived and hitherto practised is the government of the whole people by a mere majority of the people, exclusively represented. The former is

synonymous with the equality of all citizens ; the latter, strangely confounded with it, is a government of privilege, in favour of the numerical majority, who alone possess practically any voice in the State. This is the inevitable consequence of the manner in which the votes are now taken, to the complete disfranchisement of minorities.

MILL : *Representative Government.* Ch. VII.
[From the argument in favour of Proportional Representation].

I. REPRESENTATION.

Since the whole body of citizens, in which all power resides, cannot itself deliberate and negotiate and execute its own decisions, it will be compelled to have recourse to representatives, empowered to exercise certain of these functions in its behalf. We can safely assume that a nation which is attempting to organize itself according to the democratic idea will have a central representative body, or parliament, supreme over all local or provincial representative councils, and that its members will be directly elected by the votes of the individual citizens. So the Parliament of the United Kingdom is supreme over all County and Borough Councils, and the members of one of its two Houses are directly elected by the votes of the qualified citizens of the Kingdom. The existence of an Upper House, composed of peers not dependent in any way for their position on the votes of the citizens, is clearly in direct conflict with the idea of democracy. For the ordinary citizen has

not, under the constitution, any means of influencing the decisions of the House of Lords ; and without the concurrence of the Upper House no scheme approved by the Lower House can become law.

Putting on one side for a time the question of a Second Chamber, let us assume in the democratic state a central elected body, something like our House of Commons and entrusted with similar powers and duties. The question then immediately arises, How should this representative body be selected ?

First, obviously, by all the citizens. But since citizen can hardly be defined otherwise than as one who has the right of taking part in the selection of representatives, the question remains, in a democratic state who will possess this right ? It is clear that out of the human residents within a given district many must be disqualified from taking part. Some are too young : a certain age, therefore, will be one qualification. The earliest age at which persons may reasonably take on themselves the responsibilities of a family, say 21, seems to be the natural time for assuming the duties of citizenship. Others, again, will be disqualified as of unsound mind. There may further be certain penal disqualifications. To what offences these should attach and how long they should continue, is a doubtful matter which need not be pursued far in this place. Clearly it is just and appropriate that a serious offence against the voting laws

should be punished by the loss of a vote; and equally clearly it is unjust and illogical that the holding of certain opinions (as in the case of "Conscientious Objectors" recently disqualified by Act of Parliament) should even appear to be a ground for the withholding of the vote. On the other hand, there would be nothing obviously undemocratic in attaching to certain classes of crime, as part of the penalty, temporary or even permanent exclusion from the right of voting. The only general rule that can be laid down as to qualification is this, that as far as possible all adult sound-minded persons of both sexes should be entitled to take part in the selection of representatives. All exclusions should be jealously watched.

Provisions actually exist in many countries by which certain classes of citizens possess more than one vote. The qualification by which the extra vote or votes are obtained falls as a rule under one of three heads, wealth, business interests, or superior education. The effect of such provisions is clearly to depress the value of the single vote possessed by the majority of the citizens. From a democratic point of view this is a mistake. The power of riches is already too great. Even if the payers of supertax were disfranchised they would still continue to exercise an influence wholly disproportionate to their numbers on public opinion as expressed at the polls. The gift of additional voting power to the rich, as such, is neither justified by the democratic principle nor advisable as a

matter of expediency. Again, recent history in all countries has amply demonstrated the fact that business interests can look after themselves. The power of the educated is not so immediately obvious as that of the rich, but it is equally beyond question. It is concealed by the fact that the most highly educated classes (commonly the well-to-do) are in any contented and well-governed state apt to be found voting in the minority. Only in badly governed states like Tsarist Russia are the Universities found in the van of reform. But even the most superficial study of contemporary opinion in any recent period is sufficient to show that the birth of political reform does actually follow the lines which *a priori* seem most probable. Educated opinion lays down, often wrongly, the limits of the possible and the impossible, the desirable and the undesirable, and within those limits the bolder spirits work. Sheer economic necessity may at times drive a community into changes unanimously condemned or distrusted by the thought of the time, and may prove feasible and salutary what was considered impracticable and disastrous ; but as a general rule the uneducated echo, without serious distortion, the opinion of those who are reputed to be better instructed than themselves. In expediency, therefore, there is no ground for discrimination in favour of superior education.

Thus the old phrase "one man one vote" seems to express accurately the democratic demand in regard to the franchise. Make men equal as voters.

In so doing you do not abolish natural or acquired inequalities ; you leave them free to exert their proper influence upon the result. You only refuse to emphasize certain selected inequalities at the expense of others. For if you give an extra vote to the rich or the well-educated you emphasize the natural pull of riches or education, while refusing such recognition to other obvious superiorities, such as good character and service or the possession of a large and healthy family. The selection must be more or less arbitrary, removing no real grievances and creating many. It is not surprising that political development is everywhere moving towards adult suffrage on the basis "one man one vote."

II. CONSTITUENCIES.

It would be quite possible, though rather difficult, to treat the nation as a single constituency. A Parliament of four hundred or six hundred might be elected by giving every citizen a list of the candidates—it would be a very long one—to mark in a certain way ; and by various devices it might be ensured that the number required could be found by a scrutiny of the papers without further reference to the electorate. But it is an obvious convenience to break the large number into sections, each section to be elected by a different group of electors; and it is usual to group the electors by districts. And, since it is advisable that the electors should have the opportunity of getting some personal

knowledge of the candidates, the groups must not be too big. Electors might of course be grouped by occupation instead of by districts, though the experiment has never been tried in the case of a national parliament. The disadvantages of such an arrangement are manifest. First, the electors in any group would be scattered all over the country. This would make it more difficult for the candidate to get and keep touch with them and on the side of the electors would obstruct the formation of any corporate opinion. Secondly, a particular district is apt to have problems and peculiarities of its own, which would be denied expression if the district had no representatives of its own. On the other hand it might be urged that occupations have problems and interests of their own, which very frequently are the subject of legislative proposals, and that it is a weakness of the geographical system that it precludes these interests from any direct expression. This is quite true ; but there are Trade Unions and federations of employers, which exist for the purpose of watching the interests of their trades. These organisations have grown rapidly in power in recent times, and the legislature is not likely in the future to take any serious action affecting a Trade without previous consultation with them. Lastly, an occupational basis of division would be very difficult to carry out completely, so as to include every citizen ; and if carried out would probably tend to emphasize class distinctions and oppositions, since

some occupations would be found to consist almost entirely of poor people while others would be practically confined to the well-to-do.

In any country which has a fairly homogeneous population, all speaking one language, it is pretty certain that the best results will be obtained by dividing the electors into constituencies according to the districts in which they live or do business. But there are countries, such as those composing the late Austro-Hungarian Empire, which not only include a diversity of peoples speaking different languages but also in many districts find these diverse races inextricably mixed together. Now even if a candidate can make speeches fluently in several languages—which requirement would of itself seriously diminish the number of possible candidates—he cannot speak them all at once. In such a case, therefore, it may be advisable to depart in some measure from the geographical basis of division. Arrangements may be made which will as far as possible allow all men of one speech to vote together for a candidate speaking their own language. A similar situation may arise, not through diversity of language, but through diversity of religion, tradition, or diametrical opposition of desires and interests, as in the case of the Unionist minority in the greater part of Ireland. In such a case it might be advisable to enlarge the district and allow a distinction of constituencies, on a religious or other basis, within it.

The special cases mentioned suggest a problem which is often in practice very troublesome. Difference of language is easy enough to ascertain, and may be a fair ground for difference of representation. But the other differences, of religion, tradition, desire, sentiment—these, it will be said, are the very stuff of which communities are made, diversities which democracy exists to reconcile without destroying. True ; and our democratic institutions, even as they are, do succeed in enabling men of widely diverse religions, traditions, and sentiments to work amicably together, sometimes voting side by side, sometimes on opposite sides, but never so diametrically and utterly opposed that each cannot feel that the resultant national policy is to some extent his. Bitternesses of course arise from time to time : nearly always some, and sometimes a large minority of the citizens, feel themselves to be totally estranged from the national policy. This condition, however, is seldom permanent in any one individual, and the minority does not remain the same but constantly changes its composition. The last is the saving fact. It is a permanent minority which makes democracy impossible. Thus if the question is asked—by what criterion shall we know whether these sentimental differences are or are not sufficiently serious to warrant special arrangements for separate representation ? the answer is—when you see signs of the formation of permanent minorities in the existing constituencies. Such

minorities do not occur casually or without solid ground: their origin can always be traced in the history of the country. To ignore the difference is, commonly, to emphasize and embitter it; and the best chance of removing it is to recognize it. Two men working together may do more work than two working separately; but if they are always quarrelling they will do very much less; and perhaps if they work apart, they will ask after a time to be allowed to work together.

III. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION OR SINGLE-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES.

If the electors are grouped in districts, the alternative methods which present themselves may be divided for our purposes into two. The districts may be comparatively large, each electing a number of members, in which case some form of proportional representation will almost certainly be necessary, or they may be comparatively small, each electing a single member. It is not necessary here to examine the various forms of proportional representation which have been practised or suggested in various countries. We are here concerned only with the main differences of principle between the two methods. The object aimed at in all schemes of Proportional Representation is one and the same, to secure that the ratio between the strength of the various parties in the elected body shall correspond as exactly as possible with the ratio between the numbers of their

adherents in the electing body. On the system of single-member constituencies it is quite possible that one party should have a narrow majority in every single seat, thus monopolising all seats in Parliament on the strength of the support of little more than half the voters in the country. Or, if there are three main parties, the support of less than half the voters might give a similar result. The advocates of Proportional Representation lay their main emphasis on the desirability of remedying the condition of the unrepresented minorities. In order to effect this they have to enlarge the electoral districts sufficiently to entitle them to several members ; and it is important to note that the larger they make the electoral district the more perfectly will minorities be represented. A small minority scattered all over the country will have a greater chance of getting one or two members into Parliament if the electoral district comprises the whole country than if it is any smaller area. Proportional Representation, then, seeks to make the elected house in its party divisions a mirror of the nation ; and, as a means to that end, wishes to make the groups of electors as large as possible. Difficulties of communication and the desirability of giving the elector some opportunity of personal contact with the candidates between whom he is to choose set limits to the extension of the electoral area. A compromise therefore has to be accepted. The area must be small enough to allow of the requisite personal contact and yet large enough to

ensure that all important minorities have a fair chance of securing representation.

The effect of Proportional Representation first and most obviously, will be to produce smaller majorities in Parliament than any we are accustomed to in this country. Secondly, it tends to the multiplication of parties. Any vigorous minority, such as the anti-vaccinationists, the anti-vivisectionists, the Roman Catholics, the Irish workmen in many of our large towns, is practically invited to put a candidate on the district list and so secure representation. Clearly a Parliament composed of or containing a large number of small parties would organize government very differently from recent British Parliaments which have consisted of two main parties, with only two small blocks of members (Labour and Irish Nationalists) uncertain in their allegiance. It is plain, therefore, that the question between Proportional Representation and Single Member Constituencies is one of fundamental importance. The adoption of Proportional Representation in this country would mean little short of a revolution in the principles and practice of Parliamentary government. However these effects are viewed, it is not surprising that the Proportional method has exercised and still exercises a powerful attraction on many ardent advocates of democracy. As democrats their aim is to give opinion its proper expression, and at first sight it seems plain that a proportional scheme must effect this more surely than one which decides by bare majorities like our

own predominantly single-member organization. If opinion in the country is divided in the ratio 5: 4 a machinery by which the resulting Parliament embodies a ratio of 2: 1 seems obviously unsound and unjust.

Now reasons of expediency may be urged on both sides. For instance there are strong reasons in expediency against a sudden and fundamental change in the political organization of any country. But expediencies are manifold, incalculable, inexhaustible; and our main concern is with principle. The question we have to answer, in the light of the idea of democracy already outlined, is this, whether, in principle, there is any ground for deciding between the proportional system and the single-member constituency.

As a preliminary, it is to be observed that the advocates of proportion maintain a very narrow and literal interpretation of the word representation. The voter is considered to be represented only so far as a member of his own party is present in Parliament to speak for him. It is presumed that a member of Parliament speaks for his party and no one outside it. The conclusion follows that under the system of single-member constituencies the minority who voted against the member is unrepresented. This is not true even as things now stand. The member, once elected, represents his constituency and often speaks explicitly in its behalf in cases where its local interests are involved. Even apart from that, it

is quite possible for a voter to feel that he is fairly represented by a member whose candidature he did not himself support. Many a Liberal of Birmingham refrained from voting against Joseph Chamberlain; and many others, who took every opportunity of opposing him, were yet proud to be represented by him in the national Parliament. If it will be an effect of Proportional Representation that members of Parliament will cease to represent constituencies and become merely the spokesmen and representatives of a party, that is in itself good ground for hesitating to adopt any proportional scheme. If, on the other hand, as seems probable, the single-member system proceeds upon and encourages a broader view of representation, and tends to make the member less the party politician and more the spokesman of a district, that is in itself a solid reason for preferring the single-member constituency.

Secondly, the apparent injustice of an electoral system which is apt to exaggerate majorities—and it is probable that a single-member system would always tend to do this, however carefully framed and guarded, in a somewhat irregular fashion—is mitigated not only by certain compensating gains but also, on a closer examination of the proportional alternative, by clear defects in that alternative itself. In the first place, the exaggeration of majorities may be advisable in the interests of effective government. Narrow majorities, alternating this way and that, make,

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it may be suspected, for half-hearted measures and wavering policies. But in any case the alternative offered by a proportional system is not correctly stated as for instance a 5 : 4 ratio in place of one of 2 : 1. The important point is that the proportional scheme would fail to force the electorate to group themselves in the 5 : 4 ratio at all. It would lead them to sort themselves out in some such ratio as 3 : 2 : 2 : 1 : 1, in five groups where two sufficed previously. This is the significant fact on which attention should be concentrated. The reduction of the manifold differences and divergencies within the electorate to a simple ratio between two main policies or tendencies means a great deal. It means that a number of competing claims have been previously compromised, withdrawn, or conciliated which under a proportional system survive to complicate proceedings within the walls of Parliament itself. In other words some of the preliminary work towards the formation of a national decision, which under the one system is thrown upon the electors, falls under the other on the elected representative. Thus the immediate responsibilities of the electors are diminished while those of their representatives are increased. Further, the work thrown on the politicians takes the form of the formation of "blocs" by bargains between parties, a process full of possibilities of ignoble intrigue and subtle corruption. From a democratic standpoint the throwing on to the elected house of work which could be done by the

electors is very strongly to be deprecated. In fact, if this analysis holds good, we may say that Proportional Representation is in this respect definitely less democratic than the single-member constituency.

The argument just stated rests upon the admitted fact that a proportional system tends to encourage the multiplication of parties, between which combinations and alliances have to be arranged for the better despatch of the business of Parliament. It is claimed as an advantage for the alternative system that it discourages the multiplication of parties, and forces the electors to group themselves normally in two main camps. It is worth while to look rather more closely at this feature of the single-member constituency, since a grasp of it is fundamental to the understanding of the machinery of democratic government.

For this purpose perhaps we may be allowed to take the British organization, in spite of its inequalities and inconsistencies, as indicative of the nature and effects of a single-member system. In England, as matters stand, the tendency is very obstinate to force all political thinking into the two-party mould. Diversities within the large parties are accepted, recognized, and even named. "Tory" shades by degrees into "Conservative-Democrat," "Liberal" into "Radical." These differences fall in each case within the party organization. A stronger case is that of "Labour," whose candidates, though they have a separate

party organization and often stand in opposition to Liberals, are yet obstinately considered by the electors to express only a further extreme of Radicalism, prolonging the left wing of the Liberal forces. And any "freak" candidate, of local or temporary interest, is forced to range himself more or less definitely on one side or the other. A "prohibition" or "woman-suffrage" candidate is not allowed to discourse solely on the merits of these questions, but has to express himself at large on all matters of public policy. The more eclectic he is, the more he allows himself to borrow impartially from both parties instead of definitely adopting the programme of one, the less chance he has of securing solid support. Each section of the electorate insists on knowing how it stands in regard to each candidate: every candidate attempts in some measure to conciliate every section of the electorate. With the multiplication of candidates and the enlargement of the electoral area that would follow on Proportional Representation, it is plain that this feature of our elections would at least become very much less prominent. Meetings would be to a greater extent mere party meetings; party programmes would become harder, more detailed, more doctrinaire, less wide, general, and elastic; and the "freak" candidate, so far as he survived, would be more freakish than before. Strong minorities, instead of getting their aims expressed with more or less adequacy in both of two rival programmes, would merely find expression

in strong minorities, narrowly partisan, in the elected house.

The main concern of the believer in democracy is not to secure that every type of opinion shall be duly represented by a separate group in the National Parliament, as though Parliament were a home of strayed causes or a museum of varieties of political doctrine. His master aim is to make possible the continuous attention of the citizens to the main currents of national affairs. In the light of this aim he cannot long hesitate between the two alternatives of Proportional Representation and the single-member constituency. The former leads to the dissipation of political thought into a number of channels whose mutual relations are comparatively obscure, while the latter forces it to concentrate on the direct opposition of two main parties, one of which is actually at the time responsible for the conduct of national affairs. Under the rule of proportion any plank will serve as a platform, if a sufficient number will gather round it, while under the single-member system the platform must be as wide as the affairs of the nation, and every party which comes before the electors must be prepared to undertake the complete direction of the national government. Thus the single-member system forces both the electors and their candidates to keep their attention on the main issues of the time, forcing sectional interests and allegiances into a due subordination. To Plato, writing at a time when states were small

and party organization unknown, the peculiarity of democracy as a form of government appeared to lie in the multifarious variety which it encouraged and developed within the community. The charge is not often echoed in these times. But if the rule of proportion were ever established in this country we might see realized in our Parliament that "bazaar of constitutions" which Plato thought at once so pretty and so ineffective. Embodying a pleasing variety of opinion, Parliament might well fail nevertheless to evolve a single coherent policy, and, while expressing with perfect accuracy the division of views among the voters on several important questions, it might find itself doomed to impotence and sterility for lack of any coherent impulse from the electorate relevant to the general lines of policy. It may be granted that the attempt to force the differences into the two-party mould means that the question brought to the electors for decision is often confused, obscure, and perplexing: but not more so than the facts. Proportion may succeed in an artificial simplification: but only for the electors, not for the elected Parliament. Proportion does not unravel the confusion; it only shifts the burden, and postpones the time, of unravelment. If the problem is obscure, let the voters have it in its obscurity and do their share in clearing it up. The kind of obscurity involved is more congenial to the average elector than the complicated affinities and alliances of the multitude of parties which collect in a proportional chamber.

What we, as democrats, seek to bring about is that the national act shall express a national will. This aim can only be attained by a system which induces in the citizens practical reflection upon national emergencies as they arise. All the ingenuities of Proportional Representation are wasted if they do not bring us nearer to this goal : actually, they seem likely to leave us further from it than they found us. In spite, therefore, of all the care which has been lavished upon their elaboration, they must be dismissed. And, if so, the only possible alternative which remains is something very closely resembling, in principle, the current British system, often so ignorantly derided, of two main parties, "ins" and "outs" and single-member constituencies.

NOTE.—The foregoing discussion of Proportional Representation is meant to apply to the election of members of Parliament in England, Scotland and Wales. It does not apply to the proposal that local representative bodies, Borough and County Councils, for instance, should be elected on a proportional system. That proposal deserves to be discussed on its merits and cannot be dealt with here. The case of Ireland is peculiar, in that for the present at least the divisions among the population of the country seem to be irreconcilable. There is therefore the danger of permanent minorities. Since in Ireland the language difficulty does not arise, the best way of assuring these minorities some representation is by a proportional system. Finally, one is entitled to oppose proportional representation everywhere, and yet approve of the use of the Alternative Vote in a single-member constituency where there are more than two candidates, and in the few two-member constituencies which still exist.

CHAPTER III.

PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE

THE people of England regards itself as free ; but it is grossly mistaken : it is free only during the election of members of Parliament. As soon as they are elected, slavery overtakes it and it is nothing. The use it makes of the short moments of liberty it enjoys shows indeed that it deserves to lose them.

ROUSSEAU. *The Social Contract*. Ch. XV.
1762.

The people are a set of masters whom it is not in a man's power in every instance fully to please, and at the same time faithfully to serve. He that is resolved to persevere without deviation in the line of truth and utility, must have learnt to prefer the still whisper of enduring approbation to the short-lived bustle of tumultuous applause.

BENTHAM. Preface to *Fragment on Government*, 1776.

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men ; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear ; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member ought blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience,—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

BURKE. *Speech to the Electors of Bristol, on his being declared by the Sheriff, duly elected one of the Representatives in Parliament for that City, on Thursday, the 3rd of November, 1774.*

My only object in Parliament would be to promote my opinions ; and what these are, on nearly all the political questions in which the public feel any interest, is before the world ; and until I am convinced that they are wrong, these, and no others, are the opinions that I must act on. I am ready to give any further explanation of them that might be wished for, and should I be elected I would freely state to my constituents, whenever desired, the votes I intend to give, and my reasons for them. But I could give no other pledge. If the electors are sufficiently satisfied with my opinions as they are, to be willing to give me a trial I would do my best to serve those opinions, and would in no case disguise my intentions or my motives from those to whom I should be indebted for the opportunity.

MILL. Letter to James Beal, dated 7th March, 1865, in reply to a letter inviting him to accept nomination as Parliamentary candidate for Westminster. *Letters.* Vol. II., p. 19.

When John Stuart Mill came forward as candidate for the representation of the Borough of Westminster in Parliament he drew up a long statement of his opinions and circulated it to the electors. They were, so to speak, his final terms, the clearly thought-out expression of a mind made up. There was to be no question of bargaining or compromise. If the voters took him they would take him on precisely those terms, understanding that he as their member would work for just those causes in just the fashion detailed in the memorandum. Nor was the memorandum the

product of negociation between Mill and the constituency: complete and final it sprang from Mill's sole brain. John Stuart Mill, however, it must be remembered, was an exceptional man, and he was conscious of occupying an exceptional position. He already enjoyed a reputation second to none in England as a political thinker; and his thinking was the inspiration of a political group for many years before he himself took his seat in the House of Commons. He was already 58 when he was invited to stand for Parliament. The ordinary candidate for Parliament does not consider himself either required or entitled to take so heroic a course. It is true that, like Mill, he puts out a statement of his views. But not only is it a much more modest document; it is also, in its general outline, frankly unoriginal. His programme is in the main the party programme, and his originalities are mostly concessions, unimportant in the party view, to local sentiment or interest. And the party programme which the candidate adopts is not, as a rule, to any great extent the product of political theory, but rather of political interest. The party programme, as we are often reminded, is a vote-catching instrument. It represents not so much what the leaders of the party think to be required in the nation's interests as what they think likely to be stimulating to the national appetite. Legislative proposals are enumerated, legislative acts are criticized; but the attempt is seldom made to show

that these proposals and criticisms are consistent and coherent with one another or collectively express a definite general policy. Individual members are free to theorize, but the party confines itself to the needs of the moment. What holds the programme together is not a theory or an idea, but the continuous life of the party and the known personality of its leaders.

If elected to represent Westminster, Mill would probably have claimed that he was empowered to support any measure which was in substantial agreement with the lines laid down in his memorandum to the electors. He would not have considered himself free to vote for a measure which contradicted the memorandum. In short he would have construed his electoral programme as a promise by which he was bound till the next general election. On any matter not dealt with in the memorandum, or in speeches and discussions during the election, he would presumably have claimed freedom to act at his discretion, so long as his decision could be shown to be consistent with his known political principles. The programme of the ordinary candidate is, as we have seen, less ambitious ; but his attitude to it during the ensuing Parliament, if he should chance to be successful, is very much the same. He regards it as a series of promises by which he is bound, for departures from which an apology is legitimately demanded ; and he claims the same freedom in regard to issues which did not come up

for discussion during the election. The attitude of the leaders of the party which is successful at a general election, and on which the responsibility of government falls, is essentially the same. They claim that they have received an authority, often called a mandate, from the electors to execute any item which was included in the party programme and advocated in their own speeches ; and they recognize, on the other hand, as legitimate the doubt whether they are entitled to legislate on any capital issue if no pronouncement on the subject was made at the time of the election. An obvious difficulty arises from the fact that the electors have to "plump" for a complete programme, and cannot make any reservations. There is therefore no guarantee that any particular item has general approval. This is the opening for many of the most familiar ingenuities of political rhetoric. The programme may have included Free Trade, Home Rule for Ireland, Abolition of the House of Lords, and Temperance Reform, with a number of less important proposals. To which item was the victory of the party at the polls due ? For which has the Government a mandate ? The generally accepted answer seems to be—for each and all, provided that each can be shown to have been brought sufficiently prominently before the electors. The prominence of an item is gauged by the speeches of leaders and candidates, by discussion in the Press, and by the scrutiny of electoral programmes.

The Mandate Theory may be taken as the generally accepted theory of the relation of Parliament to the constituencies. It has no obvious rival. It is, however, frequently criticised, and, one criticism, since it raises a question of principle should be here noted. It is sometimes argued that it is a mistake to interpret a general election as a vote of confidence in a certain line of future policy or as an authority for the execution of certain measures. The judgment of the electors, it is said, is rather retrospective than prospective, and has reference to what has been done rather than to anything proposed or contemplated. If at a general election the governing party receives the same or an increased majority, the true interpretation of the popular decision may be put simply in the words "carry on," its emphasis to be inferred from the size of the majority. If, on the other hand, the party loses its majority altogether, the vote should be taken to express disapproval of the methods and actions of that party rather than approval of the proposals of its successful rival. In either case the primary reference of the vote is to the recent past, and the secondary reference to the future, which cannot be entirely excluded, is quite vague and general. The practical effect of the criticism is to discredit the mandate theory in this sense, that the promises and programmes of a party coming fresh to office lose some of their importance, and the claim that any particular proposal received the approval of the electorate,

already, as we have seen, somewhat doubtful, becomes more unsubstantial still. The conscientious democrat, if this criticism is sound, will employ himself more profitably in exploring the causes of the unpopularity of the defeated party than in studying the grounds of the popularity of the victors.

It may at once be granted that this criticism asserts a necessary truth. The judgment of electors is undoubtedly retrospective as well as prospective, or, to put it otherwise, negative as well as positive. It is a vote against something or someone quite as often as a vote for something or someone. Indeed it sometimes looks as if the more educated a man is the more his vote tends to be negatively rather than positively motived. It is easier to tempt an uneducated audience than a highly critical and well-informed assembly with grandiose promises of an approaching millennium. The proportion between the two factors—the negative and the positive—is always hard to determine, and certainly varies at different times. The decisive general election of 1906 was certainly in the main a vote *against* the prolonged futilities of the Balfour government, and the decisive majority of 1918 was as certainly a vote *for* Mr. Lloyd George. But no intervening election is easy to interpret; and it will be noticed that in the case in which a positive or prospective verdict is claimed, nothing that deserves the name of a programme was put out by the victor, and there was

no change of ministry. All the Prime Minister asked for was permission to "carry on" and by general consent the permission was generously granted. The election of 1918 is therefore not a very good case for the Mandate theory, since the most fertile imagination could hardly claim that it gave that positive and decisive direction to future policy which that theory appears to require.

Let us look at the matter rather more widely. By the Mandate theory the people is said to give a certain group of men positive directions to do what they have offered to do ; by the critics of that theory the people is said to give the group, on the one hand, leave to "carry on," if they were already in possession, and on the other, if they were not previously in possession, only negative directions, to do otherwise than as certain others, recently in possession, did. The two views, therefore, may be described as the theory of the positive Mandate and the theory of the negative Mandate respectively. Both views assume that the electors are sovereign and give to policy its general direction, though, no doubt, with more of detail and definition in the one case than in the other. Both views assume that this opportunity of giving policy its direction occurs only at a general election, and that in the period between elections the representative body is supreme. When the election is over, the sovereign is dead. Those who represent him may wrangle as to what the living man's wishes really were, as to the correct inter-

pretation of his last will and testament ; and in case of grave doubt and prolonged inability to agree they may venture to bring the dead sovereign to life again and risk another election. But such emergencies are comparatively rare. As a rule they prefer to continue to exercise the sovereignty entrusted to them at the last election until the limit of time set to it by law is nearly exhausted, and until they have forced the last ounce of legislation out of the battered and dog's-eared mandate which the election bequeathed them. Both theories assume that Parliament enjoys an effective sovereignty under certain limits of time, which are fixed by law, and on certain terms, which are detailed in the election pledges of the governing party. Neither theory can meet Rousseau's taunt, that representative institutions in England mean that the English people is free only at a general election.

Believers in democracy who are also believers in our existing representative government are apt to maintain in practice two main propositions : (1) That a general election is the only authentic expression of the people's will ; (2) that a mandate given at a general election is the only unquestionable authority for the legislative and other acts of government. It is these two propositions, taken together, that constitute what we have called the mandate theory, whether that theory takes the positive or the negative form. The results of the theory on political practice are obvious and in-

evitable. First, there will be frequent quarrels as to what the people did actually say at the last election—a question admitting of infinite argument in every direction and of no certain and irrefutable answer. Secondly, as the time of the election recedes, the mandate inevitably becomes weaker and weaker: the main items on the programme are used up, and the theory, strictly interpreted, forbids the raising of capital issues not dealt with in the programme. Therefore, if a government continues to the end of the legal period, the latter part of its tenure of office is likely to be characterized by weakness and timidity. The expiring mandate chills the enterprise of the mandatory, until the approach of another election stimulates invention afresh. Thirdly, the theory leaves a government powerless in new and unforeseen emergencies, in regard to which no mandate can be said to have been received. European complications (as in August, 1914), or a revolt in Ireland, may demand immediate action. There is no time to "go to the country" and secure a mandate. If the only authority for government action is derived from a general election, the act of the government will necessarily be unauthorised. But it is plain that such emergencies are the occasion for many of the most crucial and decisive acts of the national life; and that a democrat cannot be satisfied with a theory or with a practice which hands them over for solution to the unfettered discretion of Prime Minister and Cabinet, assisted

or unassisted by Parliament. Fourthly, if it is true that the people is free and sovereign only at a general election, then every good democrat will ask for more frequent elections and shorter intervals between them. The old demand for annual parliaments is a logical consequence of the mandate theory to one who believes in democracy. By that theory the sovereignty of the people is necessarily intermittent: the least the democrat can ask is that it shall recur at intervals short enough to guarantee that it will count for something.

Whatever may be the theory of legislators as to their relation to the electorate, it is quite certain that in practice legislation is actually shaped by many other influences besides the pledges given at the last general election. The decision of Parliament and Cabinet on any particular matter is much affected by the activities of outside bodies, some specially formed for the purpose of influencing it, others not. Cabinet and Parliament receive frequent appeals from every sort of interest, temporarily or permanently organized, with regard to the principles and details of legislation and administration. Churches, Trade Unions and Employers' Federations, Professional organizations (*e.g.*, of doctors or teachers), philanthropic or semi-philanthropic societies (*e.g.*, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society)—countless organizations of every kind and size are always on the watch, ready to step in with a timely request or warning where their interests are likely to be

affected. There is also the flood of daily papers and other publications, recording and criticising the actions of government from day to day, always eager to voice a complaint or proclaim a grievance. These are all contemporary influences, and their importance naturally grows as the memories of the last election fade and fail. At first perhaps they are able to affect only the details of legislation—though the line between detail and principle is often hard to draw—but as the influence of the mandate weakens their power increases, and a government which has little policy or programme, or which has exhausted its programme, often seems to be doing nothing but laboriously attempting to conciliate by small concessions the urgent importunities of conflicting interests. What this shows is that the mandate theory does not cover the ground. Politicians have other ways of finding out what people want than by a general election, and where their mandate fails them they are not as impotent or as independent as they sometimes pretend to be. Since Parliament does not go off to a desert island to meditate on its mandate, it cannot remain untouched by contemporary movements of public opinion or out of the reach of powerful sectional organizations. The general election represents only a part of the influence exerted by the voters upon the government of the day.

The root of the matter clearly is to be found in the attitude of the individual member of Parliament to his constituency. The question we have to

answer is, what, in the interests of democracy, should that attitude be? The question of the proper relation of the Ministers to Parliament is a further question which must be dealt with separately. But the individual member—what is he? Is he chosen simply because he is a good and trustworthy man? Is he therefore free, so long as he keeps his promises, to do as seems best to him, employing his own unfettered discretion on each problem of policy as it arises? If so, the constituency would seem to have little influence on policy, and the chances of a truly democratic government seem slight. Further, the constituency may reasonably complain that it had so small a field from which to select. If it is required to choose simply a good man, it ought surely to be offered a wider range of alternatives and to enjoy further opportunities of studying the character and attainments of candidates. Again, if the main question is the national policy, and if it is desirable, as a democrat naturally supposes, that public attention should be concentrated as far as possible upon that, it would seem to follow that it is undesirable that the personal character of the candidates should count for much, if anything, in the decision. A candidate should be chosen because he belongs to a party, which represents a certain policy. Loyalty to party therefore becomes the chief desideratum in a member of parliament, and character and attainments sink into the background. Yet we hear frequently regrets at the

disappearance of the independent member, the man who faithfully obeys no party whip, but follows his own free judgment. But if all members were independent, it is difficult to see how the voters would exercise any direct effect upon policy. There is yet another view of the relation of the representative to his constituency, one often treated as so absurd that to mention is to refute it. Some maintain that the representative ought to be the delegate of his constituents, that he is sent to Parliament to express their views, not his own, and that only so far as he does this can he be truly said to represent them. If this view were accepted, we are told that the House of Commons, degraded to an assemblage of *mere delegates*, would lose all prestige and authority and would be reduced to impotence.

We have stated three different views of the representative function. According to the first the representative is not bound by anything except his own promises ; according to the second he is bound mainly by ties of party ; according to the third he is, or ought to be, pledged to express the views of his constituency. The upholder of the second view will admit the necessity of an electoral programme and the obligation to make good the promises made at an election ; and the advocate of the third will admit not only this but also the necessity of parties and party loyalty ; where the three views differ is as to what constitutes the essential and overriding obligation. What we

have to ask is, which view best expresses the democratic idea. And as soon as the question is asked, it is seen to admit of only one answer. The third view is what democracy requires. No other single change would bring us so near to genuine democratic government as the general adoption of this view of representation by candidates and by constituencies. For democracy requires that what the people can decide it shall itself decide, and not leave the decision to others ; and therefore that the representative of a constituency shall become, so far as he can, a delegate, the chosen bearer to a representative assembly of a decision not his own. For many reasons it is only to a limited extent that he can become a delegate in the strict and narrow sense of the word. The issues which he will have to judge in Parliament are not fully defined when the election takes place, and this fact necessitates a certain freedom of action in the delegate. Only a general decision can be given in advance, even if the majority of electors had the knowledge to give any other. Pure delegation is only possible on a simple and definite issue, a question which requires a mere yes or no, and then only when all factors relevant to the decision are known in advance. The greater part of the business of Parliament is far too technical and complicated to admit of settlement by mere delegation. The bogey, then, of the *mere* delegate may be put on one side. What the democrat claims is that a representative who is in earnest

with democracy will try so far as he can to be the delegate of his constituency, that he will throughout consider himself to be employing his judgment and his abilities in the service of those he represents, and, when he votes, to be giving not so much his vote as theirs. This, he urges, is representation, this is democracy, and nothing else.

To this view it may be objected, first, that it leaves no room for party. If the member is trying always to express the views of the majority of his constituents, there is no guarantee that he will consistently follow any leader. Further, it may be argued that, if this view were generally accepted by candidates, it would not matter what private views the representative held. A Conservative might represent a Liberal seat better than a Liberal, if he were better at divining and expressing the constituency's views. There is the obvious reply that it is exceedingly difficult, though by no means impossible, to express fairly views with which you are in fundamental disagreement, and that for this reason the representative's views should be of the same general colour as those of the majority of his constituency. But, further, the criticism ignores the essential and necessary function which party plays in the presentation to the constituency of the political issues of the moment. Just because of the great complexity of Parliamentary business, some antecedent simplification of the issues is necessary before the constituencies are able to give a judgment or decision at all. Our method of achieving

this necessary simplification is to induce the candidates to group themselves into two or three parties, each representing a different programme, and each prepared, if called upon, to undertake the government of the country. Unless the choice of a representative is the choice of an adherent (with however many qualifications) of one of these main policies, it is difficult to see how the vote of the constituency can have any direct or readily intelligible significance. But if the choice of a representative is also the acceptance of a line of policy, the service of party becomes a necessary element in the conduct of a member and finds a place among the fundamental terms on which he is accepted as delegate. It is not as a mere individual but as a member of a party that he is elected, and a vote against the party will require apology and justification as much as a vote opposed to the wishes of the constituency. The member is thus pledged to a double loyalty, to his party on the one hand and to his constituency on the other, but the obligation arising from the two claims are not normally conflicting but coincident: loyalty to party is a necessary element in the service of the constituency. It is not true, therefore, that the view under discussion leaves no room for party; and if it involves the consequence that a vote against the party policy is justified when such a vote is clearly desired by the constituency, it is a consequence which seems to be necessitated by the claims of democracy and which is not likely to

render difficult or impossible party government as we know it.

It will be objected, secondly, that this view deprives the representative of all independence and originality. It depresses his status and degrades his function until he becomes the mere creature of his party and his constituency. Is he never to assert his freedom, and record a vote which is neither that of his party nor that of his constituency, but his own ? The main answer to this criticism is, of course, that if the country is to be governed by the opinions of some six hundred individuals, however well qualified and however carefully selected they may be, it may be governed well but it will not be a democracy. A representative is not sent to Parliament to express his private opinions, and, when he is expressing them, he is not acting as a representative. Further, the representative has had his chance, at the election, of making terms with his constituency. He was free to tell them that on certain main points his mind was made up, and that he would not consent to surrender his convictions to those of his constituents. Even though he may feel a scruple in claiming a " mandate " for every item of such a statement, there is no doubt that he is morally entitled to act as he there said he would, and to consider that in so acting he is true to his character of representative. And, in the last resort, it must be granted that he is free, upon certain conditions, to back his own opinion against that of both his

party and his constituency. If he thinks he sees a better way of getting what the country and his constituency really want, a surer method of securing what his party is really aiming at, than the measures proposed by his party and accepted by his constituency, he is morally entitled to do what he can to bring that alternative about. For he is opposing the party and the constituency in their own interest and at his own risk. He is always free to oppose a passing wave of opinion, either in Parliament or outside, on the ground that it is only a passing phase, trusting that in the long run his view will be seen to be the truer to the principles on which he and his opponents are agreed and to the permanent interests which all profess to serve. For this reason it is undesirable that the member should be too closely controlled either by his party or by his constituency. The suggestion, for instance, is sometimes made that a member of Parliament should under certain conditions be liable to recall by his constituents. Such a change might have good results, but its danger is obvious. It might deprive the representative of a valuable and necessary kind of freedom—the freedom to ignore or oppose passing gusts of opinion. Finally, the assertion that delegation, in the sense here intended, involves a depression or degradation of the status of the representative may be met with a flat denial. To express the wishes of a constituency is a more difficult, dignified, and important function than to expound the idiosyncrasies

of a necessarily biassed and limited individuality. The representatives of Manchester, if they really represented Manchester, would speak with far more authority and would be heard with far more respect than they could ever claim as mere individuals.

Democracy, then, requires that a representative should be the delegate of his constituency, that he should speak in its name and vote on its behalf. But how can this relation be maintained? It is established, of course, in the first instance, at the election: but, as we have seen, election pledges and mandates soon lose their freshness and their relevance, and a general election cannot be expected much more often than once in four years. Some way must be found of bridging the gap between elections, if the representative is to remain during those four years in any true sense the delegate of his constituency. But it is plain that in this case where there is a will there is a way. A member who really wishes to express the views of his constituents will soon devise means of discovering what their views are, and those who have no experience of constituencies will not be able to give him much help. Clearly he must remain always in the closest possible touch with his constituents, continually reporting to them on the state of affairs in the House of Commons, explaining difficult points, justifying doubtful votes, persuading them of the wisdom and honesty of his own conduct as representative. He is their expert |

adviser, as well as their delegate, and he will always be ready to put his expert knowledge at their service on matters of parliamentary tactics and procedure and on details of legislation and administration, as well as on general principles of policy. On all questions they are entitled to expect a lead from him, and on the other hand they may well ask that sometimes, when there is no question of sacrifice of principle or conscience, their representative will undertake to record a vote with which he personally disagrees, just because such is the wish of his constituents. Throughout the representative should remember that he is responsible to the constituency as a whole; not to any one section within it, and should take care to ensure that every type of opinion has free access to him.

If a connection of this kind could be established with the constituency, the chief ground of Rousseau's complaint that the sovereignty of the people under representative institutions is intermittent would be removed. The general election, with its pledges and programmes, would not indeed lose its importance, but it would be deprived of its overpowering and unique significance. The continuous sovereignty of the people, at which democracy aims, would be immeasurably nearer realization. The paralysis of government in its later years of office, which is a consequence, as we have seen, of the theory of the mandate, would no longer be excusable. Lastly, the electoral pro-

grammes themselves could be purged and simplified, since the embargo on the production of capital measures without such previous warning could be removed. This last result would surely be most desirable. "Promises," says William Godwin, "are, absolutely considered, an evil, and stand in opposition to the genuine and wholesome exercise of an intellectual nature." He means that respect for a promise given in the past will deprive a man of his freedom to meet present emergencies with the best measures that his wits can devise. The criticism has surely some point against a party programme which is in effect a promise as to the direction of the major activities of the party for the next four years. Such a promise must contain an element of prophecy which events may falsify. If the recipient of the promise is dead or dormant, as the mandate theory in effect assumes, the giver is faced with three alternatives, dissolution, dictatorship, or fidelity to a plan which events have made unworkable. But if the recipient of such promises can be induced to remain always alive and active, as we now see he might be, then, in the first place, promises are less necessary, and, in the second place, they are less binding. It is always possible, without a dissolution, to go back to him and lay the case before him; if a promise was given, to ask for a modification of its terms, or, if a new departure is required, to ask for authority to make it. Many embarrassments of government will therefore be removed if members

of Parliament can succeed in keeping their constituencies alive between elections and can constitute themselves genuine representatives of their opinions.

NOTE.—In the new German Constitution, Section II (The Reichstag), Article 21, occurs the following interesting statement of principle: "The deputies are representatives of the whole people. They are subject to their conscience only, and not bound by any mandates." But how shall a man represent a whole people? It would be interesting to know with what arguments this principle was recommended, and by whom.

CHAPTER IV.

MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENT.

THE Government is not a three-quarter back trying to get its policy past the public goal-keeper.

The Times. [Leading Article: July 31st, 1919].

The Cabinet, in a word, is a board of control chosen by the legislature, out of persons whom it trusts and knows, to rule the nation.

BAGEHOT. *The English Constitution.* Ch I. [1867].

In spite of the Privy Council, in spite of Orders in Council, of Royal Warrants and ceremonial observances, in spite of the Norman *le roy le veult*, Ministers are no longer advisers of the Crown, but delegates of Parliament, whose authority lasts only so long as they retain the confidence or at least the support of a majority of the House of Commons. English Government to-day is carried on by standing executive committee, responsible to Parliament for all that it says or does, and liable to be displaced if it offends the sovereign body. The Ministry indeed leads Parliament, but only so long and in such directions as Parliament is willing to be led.

REDLICH and HURST. *Local Government in England.* Vol. II., p. 353. [1903.]

The third of the above quotations may be said to embody the accepted view of the relation of the Ministry or Cabinet to Parliament, as established in the practice of the constitution before the war of

1914. The ministry or cabinet is regarded as a committee of Parliament, with executive powers, and is even said to be its delegate. The question we have to ask, following the line we have hitherto pursued, is whether the existing practice, or any obvious modification of it, will serve as a satisfactory vehicle for the democratic idea. By following the hint contained in the use of the term delegate above, and by giving a natural extension to the conclusions reached in the last chapter, we are at once led to attempt a simple solution. Let us suppose, at least for the sake of argument, that the relation already supposed to exist between the representative and his constituency is repeated, first, in the relation of Cabinet and Parliament and, secondly, in the relation of Prime Minister and Cabinet ; that the Cabinet is in some sense and as far as practicable the delegate of Parliament, and the Prime Minister of the Cabinet. We have to consider whether such a relation corresponds or might correspond to the facts, and whether, if it does or did, the principle of democracy is likely to be helped thereby to realization.

We have seen that in democratic theory the representative expresses in Parliament opinions not his own, or not merely his own, and speaks with weight just for that reason. But these opinions, which he expresses, he himself, as an expert adviser, helped to form, and further he holds himself free in certain circumstances, at his own risk and with full publicity, without divesting

himself of his representative character, to act and speak contrary to the existing opinions of those he represents. He is in close and continuous contact with his constituency, and as a result his conduct in Parliament is bound to show traces of compromise and opportunism as he adjusts it from time to time to meet the legitimate claims of conflicting interests and ideas among his constituents. Of the analogous statements which might be made of the Cabinet in relation to Parliament many are unquestionably true and apposite. The Cabinet also is expected to express opinions not merely its own, and in proportion as the opinions expressed are known or suspected to be confined to the cabinet and not effectively supported outside they lose weight and authority. And in the formation of Parliamentary opinion the Cabinet gives the lead, and plays the part of an expert adviser, putting its special inside knowledge at the disposal of the assembly as a whole. But the Cabinet, like the representative, holds itself free in some measure, at its own proper risk, to act counter to the views of its own supporters and of the House as a whole. For though the government is dependent on its majority, methods are easily devised of securing a majority for measures of which the majority of members wholly or partly disapprove. The support of members for such measures is the more easily secured because of the generally accepted rule—one of the most potent agents in creating party discipline—that an adverse vote

in the House of Commons means the fall of the ministry. Lastly, it is plain that the Cabinet is obliged by its position and duties to be in continuous contact with the House ; and it is inevitable that its dependence on a majority in the House should be a frequent cause of compromise and opportunist improvisation.

But though these analogies are interesting and may turn out to be important, it is evident that the relation of Cabinet to Parliament can never be the same as that of a member of Parliament to his constituency. The constituency appoints its representative, but the Cabinet is not elected by Parliament. The Cabinet on the other hand may be destroyed at any moment by the action of Parliament ; but no action of the constituents will avail to unseat a member, once elected, until some cause beyond their control brings about another election. The Cabinet, again, is selected by the Prime Minister from those groups of members only on whom he considers himself entitled to rely for support ; from the rest of the House a hostile attitude is expected : it may therefore be argued that the Cabinet represents, not the whole House, but only a section, though always a majority, of it. It is as if the representative (considered now as analogous to the Prime Minister) were appointed by the central party organization, and undertook the representation of the constituents with the aid of certain individuals selected by him from among those of his constituents who were in agreement

with him, retaining his office so long as he could show that a bare majority continued to support him. The main difference between the two cases follows, clearly from the continuous existence of Parliament on the one hand and the intermittent existence of the electorate on the other. The representative is chosen by a body on which afterwards he is in no sense dependent : the Cabinet is continuously dependent on the support of a body by which it is not chosen.

The Prime Minister is, at first sight, even more closely tied by his Cabinet than the Cabinet as a whole by Parliament. If they have to maintain their majority in the House, he has to keep his Cabinet as far as possible unanimous. On the other hand all appointments are in his hand, and as a rule his personal prestige is greater than that of any other minister. A Prime Minister has also the resource that he can appeal—though this is usually done more or less covertly—either to Parliament or to the public at large against his Cabinet. And the resignation of a Minister or Ministers does not involve the fall of the government. The Prime Minister is not, therefore, so dependent on his Cabinet as he may at first sight appear to be and it may be suspected that there is more danger of our methods of government (even as practised prior to August, 1914) leading to too great a concentration of power in the head of the government, than of the Prime Minister becoming a “ mere

delegate." But when Cabinet government is a reality we do find that the relation of Prime Minister to Cabinet is in principle the same as the relation indicated as actual or desirable between Cabinet and Parliament and between the member and his constituency. He is its delegate in the sense that he expresses its decisions; views, therefore, or resolves not merely his own. At the same time he preserves a certain independence to refuse or modify such decisions, without ceasing to speak and act as head of the Cabinet. And in the formation of such decisions his own voice has the greatest weight, as that of the appointed leader and expert adviser. Unless he is singularly overbearing or exceptionally successful in meeting opposition, his resulting action will show the familiar traits of compromise, concession, and opportunism.

If the principle of democracy is to be realized it is necessary that the impetus to every act of government shall originate in the country or in the constituencies, at the circumference, as it were, and not at the centre. It is therefore necessary that the principle of delegation shall persist through each stage in the representative hierarchy to the very top. If the representative is not a delegate, democracy is stifled at birth; and in proportion as the Cabinet or the Prime Minister refuse to consider themselves delegates, Cabinet government becomes a hindrance instead of a help to the realization of the democratic idea. And in spite of the officially recognized opposition, and of the

fact that the Cabinet is selected from only a part of the House of Commons, the Government and its policy do really represent in a real sense the whole House. An active minority can at the very least always secure concessions, and a big measure when it emerges from the House in its final form is, in detail at least, the product of the collective wisdom of the assembly as a whole. If it is true of any country, it is still more true of any Parliament, that it gets the government which it deserves. The Cabinet may therefore be considered, without any undue straining of words, as at least capable of serving as the true delegate or representative of a democratic assembly. The Cabinet, with the Prime Minister at its head, is the culminating point in that process of delegation by which alone, so far as one can see, democratic government is possible in a political unit of the size of the modern nation. Concentrating in its hands, as historians have often observed, practically all the historic powers of the monarchy, it is yet an anomalous and almost accidental development whose permanence has often been doubted. At the present time (1919) politicians do not seem to be entirely agreed as to its function or its utility. It is not at all certain how far "reconstruction," under the present Prime Minister, will allow the restoration of pre-war practice. The question of its place, therefore, modified or unmodified, in the democratic scheme is of some immediate interest: it is also essential to our present purpose.

Parliament is a committee of the nation, whose sole legitimate function, on the democratic theory, is to make the will of the nation effective, or, to return to a phrase used more than once above, to make a national act possible. Cabinet and Prime Minister are essentially creatures of Parliament, existing at its pleasure and in the form determined from time to time by it. They are devices which it has found necessary to the performance of its task. Though Parliament does not legislate concerning the office of Prime Minister and its duties, though it has never formally intervened in the creation and development of the Cabinet Council, the only justification of these offices and institutions is as serving its will, their whole authority and prestige are drawn from it ; and a Parliament which was determined to modify or abolish them could not remain long at a loss for means to procure the execution of its wishes. Though a Prime Minister will sometimes appear to be the ruler, even the arbitrary and irresponsible ruler, of Parliament, rather than its servant, assisted by ministers who are mere extensions of his personality, yet this can occur only by the sufferance of Parliament, which, for the time being, is presumably content to see itself deprived of all active or originative force in the determination of acts of government. This is only a further illustration of a proposition otherwise amply established, that institutions alone cannot create democracy ; at the best they can only make it possible, and at the

worst the obstacles they interpose are seldom sufficient to make it impossible. But, however Prime Ministers and Cabinets may in fact behave, there can be no doubt as to the purpose which democracy requires them to serve. Their sole legitimate function is to make effective the wishes of the popularly elected assembly, which is itself striving solely to express and carry out the wishes of the nation. Their first responsibility, therefore, is to Parliament and through the Parliament to the nation ; for it is only as delegates of Parliament that they serve the nation as a whole : as individuals, they represent a single constituency. So far as they ignore or belittle the authority of the representative assembly, they divest themselves of their proper function and their action loses its special authority.

It may be suggested that the essential dependence of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on Parliament would be more effectively established than it is at present, if one or both were actually appointed by the votes of the newly-elected House of Commons, fresh appointments being made in the same way in the case of casual vacancies in the Cabinet or of a change of ministry without a fresh general election. The present practice is, of course, that the Prime Minister is nominated by the Crown, and himself, with the consent of the Crown, selects his Ministers and Cabinet. The nomination or approval of the Crown introduces an element which is patently undemocratic, since the opinions of

the Sovereign are not directly amenable to any kind of external control. And in this one case the Crown cannot act on the advice of the Ministers, since there are no Ministers to advise it. So far as the selection of a Prime Minister is concerned, in four cases out of five there is no difficulty : the alternative leader is obvious to all, and the King's nomination is a mere form. But in the fifth case the sovereign is certainly placed in an awkward situation : he is forced, however reluctantly, to decide a political issue of the first importance by his own judgment. If the Crown is to remain outside politics—the only condition on which a hereditary monarchy is compatible with democracy—this is undesirable. As to the selection of Ministers, the exceptions to the customary reticence of our leaders are sufficiently numerous to enable us to see that the approval of the Crown is by no means always a mere form. In the nineteenth century, at least one political career was cut short by the refusal of Queen Victoria to accept a particular politician on any terms as a Minister : in many other cases, no doubt, there have been difficulties. The irresponsible interference of the Crown is itself undemocratic ; but it is made even more dangerous to democracy by the secrecy with which it is carried out. Democracy becomes at once impossible if the nation is to be deprived of the opportunity of knowing what is being done in its name. If the King gives advice to the Prime Minister which the

Prime Minister accepts, clearly the responsibility is with the Minister, and there is no need that the King's name should be mentioned. But a veto on appointments is an act of authority, and, like any other act of authority, should be publicly exercised, so that it may be capable of being questioned before its effects are irremediable. It may be replied that the Prime Minister designate has the obvious resource that he may refuse to serve. But it is much to ask of a man who is offered perhaps the chance of a lifetime, that he shall refuse it merely because he cannot get his way in regard to some small detail. It is at best a clumsy way of securing what can be simply and honestly effected at once by establishing the principle that the consent of the Crown to the appointment of Ministers is unnecessary, or (if that characteristically English device is preferred) is a mere form. It should be no more than a form, if it is true that "ministers are no longer advisers of the Crown."

They are substantially, as we have seen, the delegates of Parliament, and on this ground it is urged that they should owe their appointment to it. For various reasons it may be doubted whether such a change would advance the interests of democracy. Experience of assemblies lends strong support to the view that a large body is ill-suited to the task of making appointments, even when the range of alternatives is previously narrowed for it by a committee of selection. The collective wisdom is no bad judge of the common

interest, but a poor judge of persons. Further, appointment by the House as a whole would give great power to small groups or fractions within the Government majority to dictate to the Prime Minister, since the transfer of, say, 30 votes from one side to the other would frequently be decisive. And the opposition would have a considerable influence on the selection of ministers, unless the majority supporting the new government settled its list in advance and voted solid for it. Finally, if the function of a minister is considered quite generally, it does not seem unreasonable that his selection should rest with the Prime Minister. A minister has two separate but connected duties, that of assisting, as required, in the formulation of the general policy of the government and in its application to particular problems as they arise, and that of controlling on behalf of Parliament the administration of some particular department of government. Ministers excluded from the Cabinet exercise, presumably, only the second of these functions, *i.e.*, they have no voice in the determination of policy except perhaps so far as their own departments are concerned. In selecting Ministers the Prime Minister will naturally choose, first, men who are in substantial agreement with him, with whom, therefore, co-operation is likely to be profitable, and, secondly, the men best fitted for the several departments of government. There are, of course, other considerations which obstruct his freedom of choice. There are services to the

party to be rewarded ; there are personal likings and dislikes which will not be altogether suppressed ; there are importunate groups within the party which insist on what they consider their due representation. The memoirs of Cabinet Ministers often give the impression that these personal and sectional interests are the most important factors in the process of cabinet making, almost to the exclusion of the more legitimate considerations of capacity as adviser and ability as administrator. But personal and sectional questions would not be deprived of their influence, though its form would certainly be changed, if the selection were entrusted to the House of Commons : so that that issue is at least indecisive. The main point appears to be this, that a minister exists not to represent a certain section of members of Parliament on all questions, but to execute in detail the policy approved by the Prime Minister and Cabinet and by the majority in Parliament in that particular department in which he has been chosen to serve. Since the Ministry or Cabinet is not a collection of representatives but an executive committee, there is no necessity for it to be elected, so long as it is controlled, by the assembly for which it acts.

So much of the subordinate ministers. The case of the Prime Minister is different. He at least stands unquestionably for a general policy and not for a department. This fact seems to strengthen the case for election by the House of Commons.

But there are obvious difficulties. Sometimes it is necessary to appoint a Prime Minister before a General Election, who forthwith announces his Ministry and appeals to the Country to give him a majority. In such a case who would select the Prime Minister? Not, surely, the House of Commons, containing probably a majority of supporters of the Ministry just discredited. The practice of the Crown appears to be, roughly, to nominate the leader of the largest party in the House of Commons, or, if the largest party is now discredited, of the second largest party in the House. In case of doubt, as perhaps in 1893, when Lord Rosebery's nomination was something of a surprise, the judgment of the Sovereign may have to decide, but as a general rule, since the party selects its own leader, the party may be said indirectly to designate the Prime Minister. It may therefore be suggested that the outgoing Prime Minister, should, as his last act of government, indicate the party which is to succeed his own, and that this party (*i.e.*, the existing Members of Parliament professing to belong to it) should be recognized as having the right to nominate its own Prime Minister. The nomination of Prime Minister would remain, as now, the act of the Sovereign, but he would act as in other matters on the advice of his Ministers, first inviting a certain party to make an election, and then announcing the result of that election as his appointment. The suggestion, however, is open

to an obvious and perhaps fatal objection. Party hitherto has been in British practice a purely voluntary organization, not formally recognized in the Law or Custom of the Constitution. Unless therefore some very plain and certain advantage were in prospect, the proposed innovation would be gravely suspect. We have seen reason to believe that the existence of political parties is a help and even a necessity to an electorate seeking to give a comprehensive and influential judgment on national policy ; and, if parties are to exist for the electorate, they must also exist in the House of Commons. But inside the House of Commons it is essential that parties should retain their fluidity, their freedom to re-group and re-combine in face of immediate necessities of action, and any device which would tend to stereotype or permanently establish existing party divisions is to be deprecated. It is to be expected that the formal recognition of party organizations in the sense suggested above would have that effect.

But if the nomination of the Prime Minister by the King, not under the advice of Ministers, is undesirable, and his election by a party designated by the King upon the advice of Ministers is for different reasons equally undesirable, what alternative remains ? Only, it would seem, election by the House of Commons as a whole. Such election would of course in fact amount to appointment by the preponderant party or combination of parties : for the parties would no doubt meet separately

beforehand and vote solid for their selected candidates. But the innovation of giving official recognition to the party organization would be avoided, and the outgoing Prime Minister would be freed from the rather invidious duty of playing a decisive part in the selection of his successor. It is true that a moribund House of Commons, which by some split in a party had just succeeded in defeating a Government and causing its resignation, might have some difficulty in selecting its successor and might make an appointment which the electorate refused to endorse. But no great harm would be done. On the assembly of the newly-elected House, the Prime Minister, finding himself without a majority, would be obliged to resign, and the House would proceed to a new election. And the principle of democracy would be to this extent advanced, that, in possessing the right of appointing the Prime Minister, the elected House would play the decisive part in determining the general policy of government. The general control being thus established, the care of the departments, at least so far as the appointment of their Parliamentary spokesmen is concerned, could reasonably be left to the Prime Minister's discretion.

Of Athens, at the most famous period in its history, it is recorded by an anti-democratic historian with some satisfaction that its government was "in form a democracy, but in fact the rule of its first citizen." Of our own constitution it is often said that it is in form a monarchy, but in

fact a democracy. But some may think that we are not far from the Athenian climax, that the more fully democracy is realized, the more nearly our Prime Minister approximates to the type of democratic dictator. They speak of the decreasing prestige and importance of the House of Commons, of the rapid atrophy and degeneration of the Cabinet ; they point to the largely increased number of " placemen," secretaries and under-secretaries of departments and sub-departments, a consequence of the rapid extension in recent times of the functions of government—all nominees of the Prime Minister and retaining office at his pleasure. There are now, they say, few members of Parliament so insignificant that they may not hope to find themselves rewarded one day for tactful obedience or disobedience by some small salaried post ; and, if that is so, how can it be hoped that Parliament will preserve a proper independence and not relapse into subservience ? The Prime Minister himself, they further observe, shows openly his sense of the futility of Parliament by ceasing to lead the House and only rarely attending its debates. His action is increasingly independent of Parliament ; he negotiates directly with " organized labour " or with the country at large, and even when he speaks in Parliament, he is not speaking to it but to the public outside. It was said above that his responsibility, and that of the Ministers, is to Parliament, and through Parliament to the nation. That may be very well in

theory, but in fact the relation is reversed. Parliament has been taught recently, and has learnt the lesson only too well, that it is responsible for its actions to its master, the Prime Minister, who is himself the nation incarnate. And, since the functions of government are not likely to be narrowed in the near future, the number of place-men will not be diminished, and the subservience of Parliament will continue.

If the truth of the above description were conceded, and if it were further granted that the tendencies criticized were solid and irreversible, not due to any extent to exceptional conditions already passing, it would be necessary to reconstruct our theory of representative democracy from the beginning. But it is fortunately not necessary to concede so absolutely either the truth of the description, or, in regard to such truth as it possesses, the solidity of the tendencies described. In the first place, it may be suggested that the peculiar position of the Prime Minister at the present time, his exceptional independence of his colleagues and of Parliament, is itself the direct consequence of a popular decision, since the constituencies at the last election showed a strong disposition to accept any candidate, whatever his party ties, who was willing to pledge himself to support Mr. Lloyd George. The rule of one man, then, if it exists, may be said to be evidence of the genuinely representative character of our institutions. But the exceptional result might be taken

as typical of the future, the democratic dictator might be hailed as the first of a new dynasty, if it could not be shown that the situation was itself exceptional and contained abnormalities which are already on their way to removal. That the national situation was peculiar needs no proof. It is not likely to recur frequently, and it would be beside our purpose to investigate its peculiarities. What is to the point is the resulting abnormality of politics. The electorate could have chosen, it is true, between party labels—candidates still called themselves Liberal, Conservative and Labour—but it could not choose between parties in the fashion to which it is accustomed at General Elections, *i.e.*, between rival policies, because there were not in any effective sense rival policies between which to choose. All three parties were more or less implicated in the existing government, and therefore no vote on grounds of party could be quite definitely construed as a vote for or against the Government. Thus party was in abeyance and failed to perform its customary function of simplifying the issue to the electorate. There was perhaps an approach to an intelligible opposition between the followers of Mr. Asquith and those of Mr. Lloyd George, with the Labour Party—an untried organization—rather obscurely offered as an alternative to both. Of the two main personalities Mr. Asquith seemed half-hearted, and his followers were in a minority even among the candidates, while Mr. Lloyd George had the

prestige—not shared with any party—of recent and decisive victory. Who can wonder that the decision was, with scarcely any effort on his part, in Mr. Lloyd George's favour? In the practical abeyance of parties it is not surprising that the election was in the main a victory for an outstanding personality.

How far the abeyance of parties was a necessity in the situation in which the country found itself need not be asked. It is sufficient for our present purpose to observe that it is a condition which is abnormal and removable, and indeed already well on its way to removal. It is also worth observing that the same cause could not fail to produce an effect upon the atmosphere of the House of Commons and its relation to the Prime Minister. Ordinarily the Prime Minister is the Head of a Party, dependent for his position on the continued support of those members of the Party who constitute for the time being the majority of the House of Commons. The policy for which he stands is theirs as well as his, and claims to be, not a free improvisation, but a loyal development of party principle and tradition. Thus the party, both as a fact in the House of Commons and as a venerable political tradition, limits the Prime Minister's freedom to yield to personal caprice or to the momentary pressure of circumstance, makes him, in short, less of a mere person because more of a representative. The removal of the party factor may, therefore, well have the effect of conferring

on the rule of a Prime Minister a certain personal and absolute character: seeing himself identically related to all elements in the House of Commons and specially dependent upon none, he may well feel that he holds his post by the divine right of personal pre-eminence, as the nominee of the nation, and that his function is not so much to execute the wishes of Parliament, as to see that Parliament duly aids the execution of the task which the nation has entrusted to him. Meanwhile the House of Commons, so far as party visions have become irrelevant or indistinct, is either lazily acquiescent, since party oppositions no longer spur members to criticism and debate, or, when at length surprised into discussion, shows itself a curious museum of opinions instead of a battleground of rival policies. The absolute freedom of the individual member has its natural result in the complete impotence of the assembly as a whole.

The process may be followed yet further. The Prime Minister, being no longer the head of a party, finds a Cabinet an encumbrance. It is mere waste of time that he should have to explain and justify his policy to a number of critical colleagues, to meet their objections and conciliate their opposition. So far as the work of government is greater than one man could discharge unaided, he must have a small committee of able and eminent persons prepared to undertake such duties as he may delegate to them and therefore

freed, as far as possible, from all departmental responsibilities ("ministers without portfolio") : it is thus made clear to the heads of departments that their task is to execute orders, not to assist in the formulation of policy. The logic, it seems, of the development is this. If the policy of the government is that of a party, it is intolerable that it should be left to one man, however eminent, to express it, at his sole judgment and discretion : it is essential that it should be pronounced with the authority of a reasonably large and representative committee of the leaders of the party. This was not the sole function, but it was one of the main functions of the Cabinet Council, and the abolition of party government rendered it for the time unnecessary. The Cabinet has, of course, another function, which many will regard as more important, that of co-ordinating the action of the various departments, of ensuring, in short, that they do execute a common policy for which the Cabinet as a whole accepts responsibility. No satisfactory substitute for the Cabinet on this side of its work has yet been devised, though various experiments have been tried. In the result, during the last few years, ministers have sometimes appeared as independent in their action and as ignorant of the policy of the government as the private member ; and quite recently (August, 1919) the surprising spectacle has been revealed of a Prime Minister giving instructions to his subordinates by means of a letter to the *Daily Mail*. It would be difficult

to find clearer evidence of the difficulty of governing without a Cabinet. But, whether a Cabinet is necessary or not, it seems plain that the Prime Minister's exceptional independence of party ties was a contributory cause of its abolition, and it is plain, further, that the effect of its abolition is to increase the personal power of the Prime Minister. Government may, in a sense, be weakened, but it becomes more personal.

If, therefore, it is feared that democracy may result in the rule of one man, and if it is claimed that a study of recent developments corroborates this fear, the answer is plain. The exceptional position of the Prime Minister and the impotence of Parliament at the present time are admitted; but it is argued that they are due in the main to exceptional conditions which are likely very soon to disappear. If party government is restored, and if the Cabinet Council is recreated, the Prime Minister will become once more what he has been said to be, and what representative democracy requires him to be, the leader of a body of ministers who are (in words already quoted) the "delegates of Parliament," responsible through Parliament to the nation and seeking to give effect to the wishes of Parliament as the authorized interpreter of the wishes of the nation. If party government is restored, the increased patronage which a Prime Minister now has at his disposal, while it might increase his power to enforce his wishes on his own party, could no longer demoralize the House as a whole. Before

1914 the weaknesses and absurdities of party government were a favourite subject of political diatribe; but the last few years have shown beyond dispute how difficult it is to devise an alternative which will not deprive both Parliament and People of all effective control over policy and as a result make of the Prime Minister a temporary dictator. In the absence of a practicable alternative, the interests of effective government and of democracy alike imperatively demand that party government and cabinet responsibility should be immediately and simultaneously restored.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND CHAMBER.

OF all the forms of government that are possible among mankind, I do not know any which is likely to be worse than the government of a single, omnipotent, democratic Chamber.

LECKY. *Democracy and Liberty.* Ch. IV.
[1896].

To construct a body which, without claiming co-ordinate authority, shall act as a court of legislative revision, and as the sober second-thought of the community, is practically beyond the power of the political architect.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

With a perfect Lower House it is certain that an Upper House would be of scarcely any value. . . . But though beside an ideal House of Commons the Lords would be unnecessary, and therefore pernicious, beside the actual House a revising and leisured legislature is extremely useful, if not quite necessary.

BAGEHOT. *The English Constitution.* Ch. IV.
[Second Edn., 1872].

We have spoken hitherto as if all that democracy required were a single representative assembly, to which the Prime Minister and the Cabinet are responsible. But, notoriously, in all countries in which representative government is at all fully developed, there are in fact two assemblies, both as

a rule directly elected by the citizens, and together constituting the sovereign parliament. In England we have in addition to the House of Commons a House of Lords, entry to which is secured by the inheritance of a certain grade of nobility or by the gift of nobility in that degree—a gift conferred by the Crown on the advice of its ministers. Since peers by inheritance largely outnumber peers by creation, the House of Lords cannot claim even indirectly to possess any representative character. The question with regard to second chambers which is relevant to our present enquiry is the question whether they are necessary to, and how they can best serve, the realization of the democratic idea, which is, as we have seen, a demand or ideal that the actions performed in the name of the nation shall be in a true sense the expression of the national will. We must first ask, what is a second chamber for? Until we have some idea of its function, it is impossible to pronounce as to its size and composition, as to its constitutional powers or method of appointment.

What, then, is a second chamber for? What function is it intended to perform? There is, of course, the check and balance theory, which regards a constitution as a balance of contending rights or powers, fatally destroyed by the recognition of any one element as supreme. By this theory the Second Chamber is required to limit the power of the First, to prevent and hinder the unrestricted supremacy of its will. But if that will is the ex-

pression of the nation's, a Second Chamber which overrides it will be acting as a check upon democracy itself. Or, if the Second Chamber is itself also representative, the national will appears to be reduced to impotence and futility by self-contradiction. So far as this theory may be held to assert the advisability of providing a check or set-off to democracy itself, it may be ignored, since our professed aim is to discover how democracy may be realized. But there is of course a danger that the popular assembly may, through stupidity or carelessness on the one hand or in malice and self-interest on the other, fail to fulfil its representative function ; and if a Second Chamber can assist in removing or mitigating this danger it will have a genuinely democratic function to perform. Even though its action may be mainly negative or repressive, it will be positively furthering the democratic idea.

Now if it is for some such service as this that a Second Chamber is required, it seems plain that the First Chamber should remain first in authority and importance, and that the other might operate in one or all of the following four ways, as (1) supplementing, (2) revising, (3) delaying, and (4) refusing or vetoing the measures affirmed by the primary assembly. It is assumed that in the ordinary course measures will be originated in the First Chamber and thoroughly discussed and decided there before they come before the Second Chamber at all. It will be necessary to examine in turn

each of these suggested modes of operation, and consider shortly the nature of each, before considering the whole matter more generally.

(1) The Second Chamber as *supplementary* to the First. In this capacity the Second Chamber will initiate legislation in matters ignored or overlooked by the Lower House, besides supplementing its criticism by its own. Among the legislative acts of parliament there will thus be some which were initiated in the Upper House and approved by the Lower, besides the large majority which the Lower House originated and the Upper House merely approved. But it is unlikely that these will be measures of the first importance. The primacy usually allowed to the Lower House involves that all such measures should be initiated there. As a supplementary critic of the Government, therefore, the Second Chamber is likely to be of more use than as a supplementary legislator. In proportion as it spends less time and effort on legislation, it has more to spare for criticism, and it is usual to arrange that it shall be composed of men whose average of age and experience is higher than that of the Lower House, and whose criticisms therefore are likely to be specially weighty and well-informed. On this side, then, the Second Chamber is required mainly as a critic.

(2) The Second Chamber as *revisory*. For this purpose the Second Chamber must possess the power of amending measures passed by the first. Such power of amendment may be either restricted

or unrestricted : for instance, the Upper House may be debarred from amending certain classes of bill at all, or from amending any kind of bill in certain directions, *e.g.*, in regard to finance. Usually any amendments made require the assent of the Lower House, and there are various ways of circumventing the difficulty which arises when the two houses are unable to come to an agreement. With these devices and with possible limitations of the right of amendment we need not here deal. Of the revisory capacity in general we can say that it will be democratically exercised if the motive of any amendment is to ensure a better expression of the people's wishes, if the bill is amended only where it misrepresents them or by bad draughtsmanship fails to carry out its own intention. Such amendments the Lower House, if it is honest and enlightened, will accept. Here again the office of the Upper House is that of a critic. To carry out this particular kind of criticism well, it should be in substantial agreement with the Lower House ; its criticism should be that of a friend and ally, not that of a rival or opponent.

(3) The Second Chamber as *suspensory*. A considerable extension is given to the power of the Second Chamber if it is given the right of suspending or delaying the operation of bills passed by the Lower House. The right might be conferred direct in some simple form, but it arises in the case of the English House of Lords from the limita-

tion of the right of veto by the Parliament Act. It is there provided that, if the Lower House persists in any measure over a certain period of time, the bill shall become law notwithstanding the continued refusal of the Upper House to accept it. Suspension or delay of measures approved by the Lower House may clearly be consistent with democratic principles, if the ground taken by the Upper House is that the measure is wrongly supposed to be in accord with the popular wish, or that, though truly expressing the momentary wish of the nation, it represents only a passing phase of opinion or emotion, of which the nation will soon repent. In this capacity the Second Chamber may claim to perform a useful and reasonable, though rather invidious, task, that of preventing hasty and ill-considered action, with its inevitable consequence, sharp reversals of policy. It may be argued that if no Second Chamber existed to interpose the necessary delay, where opinion is evenly and bitterly divided, the first act of a new ministry would often be the repeal of the chief legislative act of its predecessor. In order to perform this duty satisfactorily and with authority, the Second Chamber should have some ground for claiming a greater degree of permanence and stability than the Lower House, a less complete and immediate sensibility to changes of popular opinion ; but if, like our House of Lords, it is completely unrepresentative and not directly amenable to public opinion at all, its authority is

fatally weakened. The Second Chamber is now more than a mere critic : it is already something of a censor.

(4) Finally, the Second Chamber may exercise an absolute *veto* upon the legislative proposals of the Lower House. It may have the right of refusing assent, and refusal may mean that the proposal is finally quashed, so that further legislation on that subject, if undertaken, will have to be started afresh from the beginning. Plainly the legitimate grounds for the exercise of the veto are the same as for the exercise of the suspensory power. Since measures may be revived after due interval, the veto as applied to any proposal for the permanent alteration of the Law does not necessarily involve more than a maximum degree of delay. On the other hand the Second Chamber will probably be rather more sparing in the use of an absolute veto than of one which has only a suspensory effect. Hence it may be, and has been, argued that to turn an absolute into a suspensory veto (*e.g.*, as effected by our own Parliament Act) is actually to increase the power of the Second Chamber. The power of enforcing delay will be used in many cases in which the bare alternatives of acceptance and rejection would make acceptance certain. Although, therefore, the absolute veto is at first sight a more formidable weapon than the suspensory veto, it may turn out in practice to be less formidable, and some would prefer, in the interest of the First Chamber, that the veto of the

Second Chamber should remain absolute. This argument, however, has reference in the main to Second Chambers whose representative character is doubtful or negligible. Their credit is so slight, and their place in a democratic government is so questionable, that their continued existence depends more and more, as time goes on, on their inactivity. Consequently, to limit their powers is to make them more likely to be used. But a Second Chamber which could claim to be as representative as the First would have no reason to be afraid of using its powers: and in the hands of such a Chamber the two forms of the veto would have their natural values. In general, if it is desired to preserve and emphasize the critical function of the Upper House, it seems undesirable to give it more than a suspensory veto. For the prevention of hasty and ill-considered legislation no wider powers are required.

The four functions above enumerated provide, so far as they are valuable or necessary, a reason for the existence of a Second Chamber. It has often been pointed out by the critics of Constitutions that an additional reason is provided when the State is formed by federation or contains a federal element. The United States of America, the German Empire, the Swiss Confederation, and, within the British Empire, Canada, Australia, and South Africa are instances in point. In all of these cases, in greater or less degree, while the First Chamber represents the State as a single whole or

group of constituencies, the Second Chamber represents it as a group of groups or confederation of States. In the Upper House the constituent States, or their peoples, are, as such, recognized and represented. The Second Chamber is thus intelligibly differentiated from the first in that, though it may be elected by the same individuals as the First, it is elected by them in a different capacity and required to perform a special task, that of expressing the federal element in the Constitution. If the reorganization of the United Kingdom, or of the British Empire, on a federal basis is ever undertaken, the proper representation of the various federating units will be a matter of practical importance. But for our present purpose the federal characteristic of Second Chambers may be ignored. For, in any case, it operates mainly as an influence upon the composition of the House, and does not very seriously affect the question of its other functions. And since any State of a certain size, however unitary, can be conceived as federal, the federal principle could be used in constructing a reformed House of Lords for our own country, with its present centralized government. The federal idea would present us with a convenient method of differentiating—perhaps rather arbitrarily, in the particular case—between two elected Chambers, but it would not in any way help to the solution of the problem of their respective powers and functions.

Let us return then to the four functions previously

analysed. Of these the most essential seems to be that of criticism. The Second Chamber is to be the sympathetic but expert and independent critic of the acts of the First Chamber. It may also in certain respects supplement it by using its right of independent criticism of the executive as well as by initiating legislation on its own account. Further, it may possess and exercise the right of rejecting—though probably the rejection should only be temporary in effect—measures approved by the Lower House. But these attributes are clearly of inferior importance: the last, indeed, is something of an emergency power and should be sparingly used. If the Second Chamber is to be of continuous service to the realization of democracy, it will not be by specializing in a certain department of State, such as foreign affairs, nor by obstinate obstruction to all important projects of change—an attitude which is apt to produce a corresponding recklessness in the Lower House—but by careful and well-informed criticism of the details of every measure forwarded to it for approval and of every development of administrative policy. It is for this reason that nearly every modern Constitution tries to arrange that the members of the Upper House shall be men of political and administrative experience, older probably on the average than the members of the Lower House, in which many of them have previously served, and enjoying a longer tenure of office. Where the appointments are not for life,

it is common to provide that only a portion of the House is renewed at each election: a degree of permanency is thus secured which may be supposed to be favourable to the growth of the kind of expert judgment which is required. For the same reason the Upper House is usually very much inferior in size to the Lower: it is to be more of a Committee and less of an Assembly. If this conception of a Second Chamber is accepted, and the function of criticism is taken as central, the danger of competition and rivalry between the two Houses is much diminished. The primacy of one House seems to be a necessity of democracy, and in our own political practice the primacy of the House of Commons has long been established beyond dispute. That being so, the only chance of securing authority and efficiency in a Second Chamber is to give it a definite and intelligible relation to the Lower House, which, while sufficiently important to attract and exercise political talent, yet leaves it plainly the second fiddle. The revisory function seems to give such a relation, if the House to which the duty of revision is entrusted has a respectable title to speak for the nation and is seen to be in general sympathy with the democracy. The proviso is necessary: for it would be a foolish man who would entrust the revision of anything of importance to a full session of the present House of Lords. It is certain that an authoritative and efficient Second Chamber can only be secured in this country by root and branch reform of the Upper House.

We have now reached a point at which we can say with some confidence that there are functions which a democracy can reasonably require a Second Chamber to perform. But we are not yet perhaps in a position to assert that any of these are necessary functions, functions which would not be performed at all, or would not be likely to be performed so well, in the absence of a Upper House on a Single Chamber system. The question we have now to face, therefore, is the question whether a Second Chamber is necessary. The commonest answer is an attempt to make the question look foolish by an appeal to history and to the almost universal support which the dual system receives from the constitutions of the present day. "It is difficult to believe," writes Mr. J. A. R. Marriott, "that those who advocate a uni-cameral [or one-chamber] system can have calculated the weight either of historical facts, or of contemporary experience, or of *a priori* speculation. It is of course conceivable that the whole world may be wrong, and that English uni-cameralists may be alone in possession of the pearl which is beyond price; that philosophers have been groping blindly, and that politicians have been guilty of crass stupidity alike in the perpetuation and the resuscitation of bi-cameral [or two-chamber] arrangements. . . . But considerations of this kind would appear to cause as little misgiving to the present [1910] leaders of the Labour party as to politicians of the type of Mr. Henry Labouchere, who during the

decade 1884-94 was persistent in his efforts to abolish the 'veto' of the Lords.'" In plain English Mr. Marriott declines to discuss the single-chamber proposal on its merits on the ground that experience has already decided the question. It is true that he mentions *a priori* speculation (which perhaps means a discussion of the intrinsic merits of the proposal), but he gives us no specimen of it, and confesses to an inclination to describe the idea as "unthinkable, but for the indisputable fact that it is thought." It is the arguments, then, from past and present political experience that have first to be met.

The argument from the history of the past has at the most only a negative value, for the reason that single-chamber government has never been given a trial. "Of the great States of the modern world," says Mr. Marriott, "three of the greatest have actually tried and abandoned the experiment of a single legislative Chamber." His three instances are, first, England under Cromwell, when the government of Cromwell's Army was for a time unsuccessfully contested, in the absence of a second chamber, by the "Rump" of the Commons. But Mr. Marriott himself points out that the conditions were such that representative government was impossible, and that the House of Commons itself was never less representative than at this time. His second instance is the French revolutionary constitutions of 1791 and 1793, succeeded by two-chamber government under the Directory in 1795.

Again the experiment is an incident in a revolution, tried under conditions which precluded effective parliamentary government, and therefore unenlightening. The third case on which he relies is that of Spain, which by the constitution of 1812, imitated from the French constitution of 1791, made its Cortes a single sovereign chamber. This constitution was destroyed by the act of the allies in restoring Ferdinand in 1814; it was recovered by a popular revolt in 1820, maintained in the teeth of the Holy Alliance for three years, and finally extinguished by the armies of France in 1823. This experiment again occurred in a time of turbulence and disorder, and in a country in which representative government had no deep roots; but in any case it is untrue to say either that it failed or that it was abandoned by the Spanish nation: it was violently suppressed by the Great Powers of the Continent, whose ruling motive was fear and detestation of democracy. If, therefore, these are the only instances which it can provide, history may not unfairly be said to be silent as to the merits or demerits of Single-Chamber government. But its evidence is questionable on another ground. Historians, when they trace the origins of representative institutions far back into the distant past, are apt to forget that democracy, which, as a demand at least, is the cardinal political fact of the present day, cannot be truly said to have existed effectively in the nation-state much before the middle of the nine-

teenth century. No evidence from history, therefore, is likely to throw much light on the question whether in the twentieth century a single legislative chamber is or is not the most appropriate organ of a developed democracy. Thus even the negative value of the appeal to history may be discounted.

The argument from contemporary experience is at first sight very strong. Practically every modern parliament, including those of the British self-governing colonies, consists of two chambers. The exceptions are so slight and unimportant that they are hardly worth enumerating. It is difficult to resist the plea that this astonishing unanimity must be based on some solid ground. And yet on investigation it is difficult to find any ground more solid than the admitted success, on the one hand, of the British two-chambered Parliament and reluctance, on the other, to experiment with a form of government for which no precedents exist. The argument from unanimity would be much more impressive if whole-hearted attempts had anywhere been made to govern under the single-chamber form. In the absence of such attempts it is surely straining words to speak of contemporary *experience*: what we are really faced with is a practical unanimity of the *dominant opinion* in every modern country in favour of a two-chamber parliament. And, since opinion is presumably based on argument, we are thus brought back to a discussion of the question on its merits. A further point is worth noticing. Even modern politicians

are not always exempt from the suspicion of a bias against democracy. They still speak of the necessity of balancing the "democratic element" by something else, which, on a careful examination, usually turns out to be the interests of property, more or less thinly disguised: most Second Chambers give some special recognition to the rights of property. They still think of the problem of an Upper House as that of an attempt (in Mr. Marriott's words) "to erect a bulwark against revolution without interposing a barrier to reform." But no revolution has ever yet effected itself within the limits of a constitution; and if it did, it would prove the constitution's excellence, not the reverse. The only way in which a constitution can "erect a bulwark against revolution" is by making democratic government possible. Revolution, then, need not be considered; and the democrat cannot admit that the "democratic element" requires to be balanced or set off by any actual or possible power or interest in the community whatever. The problem for him is precisely to release this element and make it all-powerful in national affairs. If a Second Chamber is to be proved necessary, it must be shown to be indispensable in this task. But the slightest investigation of the circumstances in which these modern constitutions were framed shows that this was far from being the preponderating consideration in the mind of their makers. Rightly or wrongly they were afraid of giving full rein to the democratic principle—nor

can it be denied that their fear was in many cases amply justified—and their belief in a Second Chamber was closely connected with that fear; or, if they felt no fear themselves, at least in devising their Second Chambers they had in mind others that felt it. The surprising unanimity, in short, is, more than any other one thing, a unanimous distrust of democracy and determination to set limits to it. The most certain lesson to be drawn from experience is that a Second Chamber is usually conceived, and normally operates, as a check upon democracy exercised by or on behalf of the great vested interests in the State.

As frankly committed to democracy, all the history and experience of all the world will not entitle us to accept a Second Chamber as a counter-agent to democracy or as a sort of re-insurance policy. But history and experience, so far as they do not exclusively support this view of a Second Chamber's functions, do not otherwise carry us beyond those functions already investigated which we decided to sum up in the one word criticism or revision. We have to ask whether this function of revision and criticism is one that can only, or can best, be performed by a separate chamber. If it is, we shall have to consider the best way of devising a Second Chamber to perform this revisory duty, which shall not also serve as a screen behind which all the vested interests in the land can shelter themselves. If not, it will be difficult to maintain that a Second Chamber is needed at

all in the democratic state. Now it is clearly quite practicable that any further criticism or revision required by a measure which has run the gauntlet of the House of Commons and has secured a majority in its final form, should be entrusted to a Committee of that House. The Committee might either be a standing committee or elected *ad hoc*. and it would either make no suggestions, in which case the measure would become law in the form in which it left the House, or it would suggest amendments, which would have to be accepted or rejected, with or without modification, by the House of Commons before the Bill could become law. Such an arrangement is practicable, but it would probably not work well. It is questionable whether the Committee would be sufficiently independent either of the House or of the executive to do the work properly. Some degree of independence might be secured if the Committee were a Standing Committee, elected at infrequent intervals and perhaps only partially renewed at each election. But the members of the Committee, just because they were members of the House, would be at a disadvantage in performing the work of revision. If they had any special knowledge of, or interest in, the subject of the Bill, they would already have expressed their views in the previous debates: if they had no special knowledge or interest, their opinions would have little authority. It therefore appears that even a Standing Committee of the House, appointed

under conditions which effectively prevented its being packed with reference to a particular measure, would not be a suitable revisory body. On the other hand, a Second Chamber, mainly co-ordinate in character with the First, as most existing Second Chambers are, seems to be independent of the First Chamber and of the Executive in a degree which is quite unnecessary and which really disables it in the exercise of the revisory function. If it has independent access to the electorate and is wholly elective, as is commonly the case, it can claim as representative a character, and therefore as good a title to decide according to its own judgment, as the First. The nation is presented with two parallel embodiments of its will. Causes of difference are bound to occur, and the conciliation of such differences is not in the nation's power. Two-Chamber government, therefore, besides commonly creating a Second Chamber independent in a degree unnecessary or even prejudicial to the proper exercise of its functions—unless it is intended as a check upon democracy—also seems to be on general grounds an illogical and inconvenient form for democratic self-expression. The mere form, whatever the precise powers conferred on the Upper House may be, seems designed to encourage friction and delay. It is a quite gratuitous assumption that on all good and necessary reforms the two Houses will be agreed: in practice the friction and rivalry of the two houses is likely to be an impediment to all legislation, good and bad alike.

The necessity of a separate body, whether called a Second Chamber or not, whose function is to revise the acts of the main representative assembly, is clearly open to question. Equally clearly, it is not capable of conclusive proof or disproof. The nearest approach to a conclusive argument that could be provided would be the clear success or failure of an attempt at Single Chamber government carried out with good will and under favourable conditions. An examination of the actual performances of existing Second Chambers in modern times, in countries in which the democratic principle is reasonably effective, might be of some value ; but, even if the results of the enquiry were favourable and proved their general wisdom and efficiency, they could in no case be conclusive. A House of Commons which knows that its handiwork will be subjected to careful revision will take fewer precautions against mistakes than one which knows that its decision is final. It is also not unknown for members of the Lower House to conciliate the favour of a section of the electorate by voting for measures which they count confidently on the Upper House to mutilate or reject. A Second Chamber thus often enables the First to escape the odium of an unpopular but necessary opposition to popular clamour. Single Chamber government might therefore have the effect of preventing the primary assembly from shirking or concealing its responsibilities and of causing increased thoroughness and circumspection in its

treatment of legislative proposals. The necessity of the work of revision is not proved by the fact that it is done well: for the better it is done, the more certain it is to be necessary.

By a slight extension, as we have seen, the Second Chamber's revisory power may be taken to include the power to suspend, at least for a limited time, the passage into law of Bills approved by the Lower House. As an extension of power this right cannot be expected to receive more favourable treatment from the opponent of Second Chambers than the right of revision. It is open to the same objections in a higher degree. The possession of a veto, either suspensory or absolute, by the Upper Chamber encourages that hasty and ill-considered legislation in the Lower House which it is designed to check. It tempts a government into a dishonest gamble for the support of interests with which they are not really in sympathy by promoting bills which they can trust the Upper House to suspend or reject. The mere existence of the machinery for slaughtering misbegotten legislative projects encourages their punctual appearance. Again, therefore, the fact that the veto finds work to do is no proof of its necessity. It may, of course, be replied that suspension is not veto, and is far less exposed than the veto to these objections. A delay of a year or two, it may be said, is a small matter in the life of a nation. But political events move rapidly, and in a year much may happen. Further it is astonishing how few measures there

are to which time is not important. The reorganization of our Irish government might be supposed to belong to this small class. The union with Ireland has lasted more than a hundred years, and a year or two would not be expected to make much difference in the proper terms of its revision. Yet it is possible that any of the Home Rule Bills which the Cabinets of the last forty years have devised, would have settled the Irish question if only they could have been passed in the year in which they were promulgated. In every case a delay of two years might have been as fatal as an absolute veto. The truth is that democracy, with its many advantages, suffers from one permanent disadvantage, as compared with other forms of government, in the necessary slowness and deliberation of its action. Constitutional safeguards, therefore, which impose additional and artificial delays should be avoided if possible.

If then neither the history of the past, nor contemporary experience, nor '*a priori* speculation' convince us of the necessity of two Chambers; if we can find no proof that there are any functions which can only, or which can best, be performed by a Second Chamber, we can but conclude that it is highly desirable that the experiment of Single-Chamber government should be tried. And if it is to be tried, our own country is far the best field for the experiment. Not only is this country famous beyond all others for the orderliness and stability of its politics, as the classical home of

representative democracy, with strong and living political traditions ; but, in addition to all this, we have already the weakest Second Chamber in the world—a hereditary plutocracy, which is frankly an organ of class-government, and, as such, is half afraid to use what powers it possesses. Indeed it might be said that, with our present Second Chamber, we already experience the disadvantages of each form of government without its advantages. The House of Lords has not the necessary sympathy or authority, even if it had the knowledge, for the revision of radical legislation. It accepts under protest until its patience is exhausted, and then applies its veto. When a Conservative government is in power, the authority of the House is perhaps increased, but the reasons for activity are diminished, and the House is apt to go to sleep. If it is a disadvantage of Single Chamber government that no effective second opinion is brought to bear on a measure, it is one that our own Two-Chamber system shares with it. At the same time, the Second Chamber, always present and sometimes active, prevents the Lower House from feeling full responsibility for what is done and from carrying out itself that final revision which a Second Chamber is supposed to effect. The division of responsibility which is incidental to the dual system remains, real enough to cripple and demoralize the Lower House, yet not so real as to call out the industry and efficiency of the Upper House. So evident are the disadvantages

of the situation, and so rapid is the progress of the Upper House towards complete impotence, that it is surprising that politicians—most of whom profess to be convinced Two-Chamber men—are not more active with projects of amendment. Only a few half-hearted and illogical proposals for reform have been made public, and they have all been received with marked coldness alike by politicians, by the press, and by the public. But the English seem to prefer that obsolete institutions should die a natural death, and hate to hasten their end by direct action. As they invented the form of monarchy in which the king does not govern, so perhaps they will painlessly evolve a parliament of two chambers in which the Second Chamber is no more than a name.

But this consummation is unlikely. The days of unconscious political evolution are already numbered. Far more likely is a hasty and superficial patching up of the Gilded Chamber which leaves its powers unaltered and ingeniously compromises as to its composition. It will be neither nominated, nor hereditary, nor elected, but all of these things at once. It will not be an Imperial Senate, nor a parliament of professions and occupations, nor an assembly of representatives of provinces and local areas, but will contain an element of each. Such a reform would merely postpone the solution of the problem, which at the same time it would probably make more acute. The real reason why the reform of our House of

Lords is not undertaken with more enthusiasm is because it is becoming increasingly evident that the demands of democracy and the signs of the times point definitely to the bankruptcy of the Second Chamber as a constitutional device. For any country which has developed a capacity for democracy there are now, or there will be soon, only two practicable alternatives. Either a separate revising body is necessary to supplement the primary representative assembly, or it is not. If it is not necessary, government should be entrusted to a Single Chamber. If it is necessary, the revisory body should not be a Second Chamber, formally co-ordinate with the First. It should be definitely dependent on the House of Commons as the sole authorized exponent of the national will : its appointment therefore should be in the hands of that body. On the other hand it should be sufficiently independent of the House of Commons to be a good and trustworthy critic of its acts : its recruitment therefore should not be entrusted to the executive, and its members should be debarred from sitting or speaking in the House of Commons. Further the method of appointment should be such that it is rather more permanent in composition than the Commons and cannot be deliberately packed with reference to a particular contentious measure. The only existing constitution which contains an arrangement approximately satisfying these conditions is the Norwegian. In Norway the Lower House at the first session after a general

election selects one-fourth of its members to form an Upper House : they are forthwith excluded from the Lower House and sit separately from it. As an Upper House, they have the right of amending or rejecting, but not of initiating proposals of legislation. If they twice reject a measure approved by the Lower House, the two Houses meet in joint session and a two-thirds majority is sufficient to carry the proposal. Some of the details of this provision are obviously open to criticism. For instance, it might be questioned whether the Upper House should be wholly renewed after each general election, and whether the right of rejection, even in this limited form, is rightly conceded to it. But in principle the provision is sound and thoroughly conformable to the principles of democracy. The Second Chamber is not the rival and equal of the First, but plainly dependent on it. Its members are elected representatives, but the electorate is not distracted and confused by a double election. The advantages claimed for the dual system are secured without the worst of its disadvantages. For those, therefore, who are afraid of the Single Chamber experiment and hold that a separate revising body is necessary, the Norwegian example offers a practicable alternative.

With the presentation of these two alternatives we may close our discussion of the problem of the Second Chamber. We have seen that the problem raises questions to which no certain answer is

possible. But the democrat, who desires that the national act shall be the expression of a national will, cannot remain content that the people shall be found to speak with two voices, however ingenious the arrangements may be for securing their eventual harmony. And one voice means in the end one Chamber. In the one alternative this conclusion is frankly accepted, in the other it is only thinly disguised. The former is certainly the more logical, and would probably be found in practice the more satisfactory, alternative. It is also superior as a plank for a political platform. We can then demand not the reform but the abolition of the House of Lords.

CHAPTER VI.

DEMOCRATIC POLICY.

JE me dis souvent qu'un individu qui aurait les défauts tenus chez les nations pour des qualités, qui se nourrirait de vaine gloire, qui serait à ce point jaloux, egoiste, et querelleur, qu'il ne peut rien supporter sans dégâner, serait le plus insupportable des hommes. (I often say to myself that an individual who showed the defects held in nations for qualities, who fed himself on vain-glory, who was jealous, selfish, and quarrelsome to such an extent that he could endure nothing without drawing the sword, would be the most unendurable of men).

RENAN. *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* [1882].

The most malicious democrat can have no idea what nullity and charlatanry are concealed in diplomacy.

BISMARCK. (Cited by Morley, *Politics and History*, p. 110).

You are *Citizens*, you have a Country, in order that in a given and limited sphere of action, the concourse and assistance of a certain number of men already related to you by language, tendencies, and customs, may enable you to labour more effectually for the good of *all men*, present, and to come; a task in which your solitary effort would be lost, falling powerless and unheeded among the immense multitude of your fellow beings.

Never deny your sister Nations. . . . So long as you are ready to die for Humanity, the life of your Country will be immortal.

MAZZINI. *The Duties of Man.* [About 1840.]

Since Democracy is a form of government, not a policy, it may be held that it will determine only the methods by which the act of government is arrived at, not its character. If the form of government settles, not *what* is done, but only *how* it is done, there seems to be no sense in speaking of democratic policy at all. But no careful thinker would be prepared to maintain that the form of organization has no effect upon the general lines of policy ; and in practice we find the opposite commonly assumed. A change of ministry, which is not a change of form, is expected to involve a change of policy in directions which have been more or less fully indicated in advance : but such a change is taken as only temporary, a swing of the pendulum, which will be followed in due time by a return movement. From a change of constitution effects upon policy far more profound and far more permanent are anticipated. Many of the hopes of the war just concluded turned on the possibility of a radical change of government in Germany and Austria-Hungary. The grant of a constitution and the summoning of the Russian Duma by the late Czar in 1906 were hailed at the time as one of these rare and fundamental changes, which gave ground for the hope that we should deal in the future with a new and more sympathetic Russia. The effects expected from such a change are effects so profound as to be independent of changes of ministry and the swing of the party pendulum, effects which modify the political

principles common to all parties, the general attitude which all parties not frankly revolutionary or purely reactionary instinctively adopt towards the problems of government internal and external. The policy of a nation has its fundamental laws—laws for the most part, nowhere written or even spoken, but tacitly assumed, not questioned in the strife of parties, but underlying and pervading the differences. It is in these laws or assumptions of policy that the constitution finds expression, and only through them in party programmes. Necessarily they are somewhat vague and intangible, however real their effects may be, and to attempt to state them is to run the risk of falling into the merest commonplace. Our study of democracy, however, would be incomplete if we did not attempt to discover what effect upon national policy, in this very general sense, the realization of the democratic idea may be expected to produce.

Our own national affairs may be conveniently divided into three departments, internal, imperial and foreign ; and it will be best to consider each separately, remembering that it is often held that while a democracy is competent to manage its own affairs, if left alone to do it, it is not competent to govern an empire or, to control effectively its relations with other sovereign states. In time of war the democratic forms of government are even now commonly suspended altogether.

I. INTERNAL AFFAIRS. By far the greater part of the time of our Parliament is occupied in the

discussion of internal affairs, *i.e.*, of matters which directly concern only the population of the United Kingdom. The regulation of its own life is of course the most necessary work of Parliament to any nation ; but it does not follow that it is the highest or most significant. Similarly an individual spends most of his time on matters which directly concern only himself and his family : but an observer may nevertheless find those comparatively few acts which have a direct reference to others more significant as expressions of his will and more enlightening as to his principles and character. But the first thing and the most frequent preoccupation is to keep one's own house in order, and therefore internal affairs may be allowed to stand first and to continue to occupy more of Parliament's time than any other department of government. In this respect the triumph of democracy is not likely to produce any noticeable change.

What we have to find is a constant characteristic of democratic legislation and administration which can be taken as fundamental to genuinely democratic government and sets bounds to legitimate differences of opinion within it. Such a characteristic may perhaps be found in the attempt to achieve and maintain equality of opportunity for all citizens so far as it is in the power of government to bring this about. This is the form which the fight for freedom now in all countries seems to have assumed. The battleground is becoming

more and more evidently economic, as it is more clearly realized that the main obstacle to the achievement of this freedom and equality is the unequal distribution of wealth and the concentration in the hands of a few of all the agents of production except labour. The idea was prevalent a few generations back that the solution of the problems involved might be left to economic forces without political "interference"; but this idea is now obsolete. We have already reached a stage in England in which equality of opportunity, as an ideal, is not openly denied or attacked; and it is generally admitted that political action of a drastic character will be necessary for its realization. The complete democratization of our parliamentary system should result in the final establishment of this ideal as the governing principle of policy in internal affairs.

The familiar phrase "equality of opportunity" needs perhaps some explanation. The demand is that every boy and girl in the country shall go to school with a completely open prospect, not with a vision of the future barred on this side and on that by the accident of birth and family circumstances; that every boy and girl on leaving school or university shall enter the profession or occupation which they have freely chosen within the limits set by their own tastes and abilities. The demand is thus a demand for the removal of certain artificial or socially created inequalities; and the result of their removal will be that the natural and

intrinsic inequalities of men in respect of character and ability will have free play. There are of course other inequalities to remove and other equalities to create besides this ; but it is fair to take this inequality in the choice of a career as fundamental. For it meets every boy and girl who has any ambition on the threshold of life, an imprisoning force which few can resist, a chilling foretaste of the power of the social order. Far as we are from satisfying this demand for equality, the evidence of history is consoling, since one can hardly fail to make a steady drift in the right direction, much accelerated in recent times. The most notable contributions of the nineteenth century brought increased freedom to the individual citizen by bringing him nearer to this ideal. Even, for instance, the improvement of roads, the construction of railways, and other developments in rapid transport, had indirectly this effect as diminishing the importance of the accident of locality ; and the establishment of a national system of free elementary education was a constructive act of incalculable value. But the nineteenth century left us still with promise rather than performance. Its greatest work was the creation as a political force of the idea of democracy. It is only when that idea dominates and controls politics that the principle of equality of opportunity will find full expression in national life and institutions.

Among possible applications of this principle,

there is one that seems beyond dispute. The existing organization of industry may be attacked on economic grounds ; and it may be that until its economic insufficiency is proved beyond dispute it will remain unreformed. But its fundamental vice lies elsewhere. If our industries had succeeded, as they evidently have not, in assuring to every reasonably competent and industrious man and woman whom they employ, a good livelihood, with a sufficiency of comfort and leisure, this fundamental vice would have been, not less, but more manifest ; and the dissatisfaction of the employed would have been even more urgent than it now is. For our industrial organization is frankly autocratic, as autocratic as that of an army, to which it is sometimes likened, but without an army's excuse and without its redeeming features. No corporate spirit binds the "captain of industry" to his men ; for essentially he is to them only a taskmaster, and they are to him only a source of profit. Whenever he can get the work done more cheaply by machines, he will dismiss them gladly, and instal the more reliable instrument in their place. More human relations are no doubt possible ; but they are difficult and they are accidental. An employer will say that he did not go into business "for his health" : the worker might well say the same, and with more reason. It is not healthy for a man to be mere "labour," just so much brute force or aptitude, his only ideal a routine regularity and an absolute recep-

tivity that contradicts every human instinct. It is not healthy for a man to be denied all property in his work and all power of organizing it ; to be forced to surrender his main energies to others for them to use as they may think best. Of such a condition one might say, as Aristotle once said of that of the slave, that it cannot attain happiness because it is not really life at all. Probably few of those who are employed in any industry would accept the description as fully applicable to themselves. But how do they escape it ? Many, no doubt, find some relief in the greater or smaller opening left to them for manual or organizing skill : many in the friendships of the shop or union. But in the end most would have to admit that the saving fact was that their work did not either demand or arouse their best energies—a fact, which if it saves them condemns the system. In industry, as in politics, the only friend which absolute government possesses is indifference.

The end of the seventeenth century in England saw the political principle firmly established that absolute or arbitrary rule was no rule, since it contradicted the very principles on which Society was founded. It seems probable that the analogous principle is now painfully seeking to establish itself in the sphere of industry. For some time the law of the land has been forced in various directions to limit pretty severely the profit-seeking activities of the monarch of industry. The recruitment of labour, the conditions of work

in factories, even the rates of wages have been modified by statutory action. But hitherto, in everything not touched by such enactments, the industrial king has retained his absolute power: he has remained owner of the enterprise, free to turn it to what uses he may please, to sell it to others, or to close it down altogether. His power is now threatened from two sides. On the one hand the public which provides the market for his goods is no longer content to interfere from outside by means of factory acts, workmen's compensation acts, and minimum wage acts—a form of interference which at best only secures that these goods are produced in ways not positively harmful to the actual producers. The demand grows for a continuous control of industrial policy. A democratic society requires to be satisfied that the things produced are worth producing, to be in a position to control the nature, quality, and quantity of production. This demand for the control of production by the association of consumers is the demand of State-Socialism. On the other hand, the men and women employed in these factories and workshops are asking by what right they are excluded from all ownership in these places and in the product of their labour: they are claiming opportunity to direct their own efforts and determine their own conditions of work. This amounts in the end of a demand for the continuous control of the policy of each industry by the workers actually engaged in it. It is the

demand of Syndicalists and Guild-Socialists. Again, it is one which a democratically organized Society must endorse. So far as it can be satisfied, the workman will regain his freedom and his personality, and labour will recover that right of property* of which capital has dispossessed it.

These two demands taken together, that of the whole body of consumers on the one hand, and that of the several groups of producers on the other, for control over all forms and processes of industry, should be jointly called the demand for the democratization of industry. Jointly, not severally. For if the first alone were realized, industry would still be an autocracy for the producer: if the second alone, it would be autocracy no less for the consumer. Recent thought in these matters has given the greater weight to the second demand; and rightly: for the producer has more at stake, and the less vital interests of the consumer are his also. But both must be satisfied, in one form or another, by any society which is resolved to give full and adequate expression to the democratic principle. Sooner or later the capitalist organization of industry will be forced to make way for a more human and coherent system. In all probability the change will only be effected by degrees and after bitter struggles. There may be a period of transition during which capital will enjoy a more and more

* 'Thus labour in the beginning gave a right of property.'
Locke : Civil Government II, s. 45.

limited monarchy, continually encroached upon by the advancing claims of those whom it claims to employ. But the end, in industry, as in politics, is certain. Capital will become the servant of labour, as kings have become the servants of their peoples. The establishment of democracy, in this sense, in industry is a necessary precondition of its full realization in the field of politics.

II. IMPERIAL AFFAIRS.—The British Empire includes the most diverse elements. First, there are the large self-governing Dominions, inhabited largely or mainly by white settlers of British extraction, but including in Canada and South Africa homogeneous groups of other European stocks. In South Africa, further, but not in any other self-governing Dominion, there is a very large coloured native population, on whose labour the community as at present organized is economically dependent. Secondly, as in India, Ceylon, and Egypt, there are large and ancient alien communities of coloured races, which had already evolved an elaborate and advanced social organization before white settlers came to their country, and are ruled by the British invaders, an inferior economic and military organisation by a superior. Practically the whole of the labour and the greater part of the small capital of the country (large enterprises like railways and harbours being excluded) are found by the native population; and the white element is a numerically insignificant

ruling caste, controlling the economic as well as the political development of the country. Thirdly, there is a large number of Crown Colonies and Protectorates, inhabited for the most part by coloured races whose political and economic organization is very rudimentary, and governed autocratically by British officials under the control of the Colonial Office. European settlers, apart from officials, are mostly occupied in extracting from these possessions, with the aid of coloured native labour, the raw materials of certain European industries; and the government is largely conducted in the interest of these settlers.

To the democrat, self-governing colonies of white men present no problem; but Empire in the second and third senses is an anomaly which needs some apology. As a democrat, he is a believer in self-government, and it is therefore contrary to his principles that any community should be forced to submit its will to that of another, unless that other is a wider community of which it is itself a free constituent member. The apology, which is sufficient to satisfy most European democrats, is, in short, that these communities which are subject to our rule are incapable at present of governing themselves, and will be allowed by us to do so as soon as they show signs of sufficient capacity for self-government. It may be replied that, if we or some other European power had not arrived to help them, they would have got along somehow in their own fashion, and

that such natural and self-conducted development, however scarred by bloodshed and tyranny, would have been healthier and more congenial to the population than a development forcibly guided and distorted to fit the interests and prejudices of an alien civilization. To this the answer is that if England evacuated Egypt or India or her possessions in Tropical Africa to-morrow, the native population would not be left to work out its own salvation. The only result would be a change of masters: another champion of European civilization would step in and take our place. In fact, it is urged, European tutelage is now necessary for these comparatively backward races. It is true that some of them might be capable of governing themselves with fair success if they were alone in the world. But they are not; and the world grows smaller and the nations closer together every day. They could not hold their own in the modern world-competition of races. Even the most forward of the less advanced races, therefore, even the Indians and the Egyptians, must remain in leading-strings until they are certainly capable of forming a self-governing community on the European model. As to the barbarous tribes of Tropical Africa and the equally uncivilized coloured races that inhabit most of our Crown Colonies, in whom no clear signs of progress towards self-government are to be seen, the reason for European interference is that their countries produce valuable raw material which our industries

require and can get from nowhere else ; the black communities are incapable of marketing, exporting, and developing the production of these raw materials. Our government, therefore, exists to assist European capital in securing the necessities of industry, and to see that the life of the coloured inhabitants, who have to find the necessary labour, is as little damaged as possible in the process. Thus, empire, whether gloried in or regretted, is a necessity ; and if the white man's burden turns out to be more economic and less philanthropic than we were once taught to think, it is not the less necessary for that.

Even so baldly and summarily stated as it necessarily is here, it is plain that this apology for Empire has its strong as well as its weak places. The economic importance to Europe of many of these colonial settlements must be recognized as supplying a respectable reason for their existence. Apart from economic interests, imperialist sentiment, not always very closely controlled by calculations of profit and loss, has been the chief factor in recent extensions of colonial empires ; and until this stupid and vulgar idealism, which has so long pervaded European thought and policy, provokes the inevitable reaction, it will be difficult to confine colonial enterprises within the limits which prudence and understanding suggest. Therefore Empire must for the present be taken as a fact, with which, like any other fact, the democrat is prepared to do the best he can. A national

policy of refusal to undertake any imperial responsibilities is out of the question. At the same time it should be observed that the effective existence of a properly constituted League of Nations, if it should be realised, would make the evacuation of any particular possession, under solid guarantees against its relapse into the hands of another power, a comparatively simple matter. If such a League of Nations were prepared to guarantee the integrity and independence of Egypt or India, one of the most serious objections to the removal of British control would at once disappear. Unless our professions are hypocritical, we looked forward already before the war to a time, not infinitely distant, at which we should be able with a good conscience to hand over the government of India and Egypt to the people of those countries. The four years of war have advanced us, to our surprise and embarrassment, several stages on the road to this consummation, not only by their effects on opinion among the populations involved, but also by the promise of the creation of a powerful super-national authority of which imperial questions will be one of the main concerns. It is obvious that a democratic government, which will necessarily view all projects of Empire with dislike and mistrust, will assist and accelerate this development with every means in its power. Continuous proof of the necessity of Empire will be a condition of the continued acceptance of its responsibilities.

Our democratic State will accept Empire only so

far as it is proved necessary. The question we have next to ask is this: Where it accepts Empire, on what principles must it exercise government if it is to remain true to its own idea? The main principle is to a democrat beyond question. Empire will only be tolerable if every fraction of the population contained in it, British or alien, enjoys self-government to the furthest extent of its capacity. The disagreeable fact about Empire is that it involves the imposition of the will of a community upon persons who are not members of the community. This fact is essential and must be frankly recognised. It can, however, in practice be made more or less obtrusive by the adoption of a more or less sympathetic policy and method of government. The aim of democracy must be to reduce it to its barest necessary minimum. In a sense this aim is more easily realized in the case of undeveloped races like those of Central Africa than in the case of more advanced peoples like those of India or Egypt. Where the population is European, it has been long seen to involve the practical abdication of Imperial control. It is easier of realization in Central Africa because the native populations involved are almost unaware of the larger problems of government. It is possible therefore to super-impose upon their existing social organization a wider co-ordinating authority without any felt loss to them, as long as the external authority does not derange or destroy native custom and usage. As soon as a population is at

all generally aware of the problems which are being solved for it by its government, it is sure to demand some control over government, and a believer in democracy is not entitled to refuse the request. In its practical application, the principle means that the rulers will work through native forms and authorities, wherever possible, innovating only with the greatest circumspection. In so acting they have to guard against the danger that their adoption of these forms will lead to one of two alternative results, both equally disastrous. It may on the one hand discredit the forms adopted, and so disintegrate native life. Or, on the other hand, it may so strengthen them that they become stereotyped, so that the natural political evolution of the population is altogether suspended. These dangers can only be avoided by a sensitiveness in the governors which is extremely rare and only to be won as the fruit of the most patient study and observation. The selection and training of governors and administrators is therefore of primary importance. They must unlearn the prejudice that self-government necessarily means parliamentary institutions on the European model, with the consequence that peoples obviously incapable of any such development are mere clay to the Imperial potter. The essentials of self-government can be preserved wherever any spontaneous social organization, even the most rudimentary, exists. Even in Central Africa self-government must be the guiding principle of colonial administration.

By a slight extension the primary principle just stated will be found to govern the solution of the economic, as well as of the more purely political, problems involved in colonial administration. In Europe our economic evolution has resulted in the creation of huge landless proletariats, which in the main can only support themselves by large-scale industry, with the assistance of capital provided by the well-to-do from their accumulated savings. Consequently there is no difficulty in recruiting the army of industry, and the terms of enlistment have been very disadvantageous to the recruit. But most of our colonial possessions are thinly populated. There is plenty of land, which every individual who is able and willing to work can support himself by cultivating. There are vast areas capable of cultivation, but not at present in use, which would provide sustenance for any conceivable expansion of the population for generations to come. Therefore, there is not at present, and a normal development is not likely to produce, a reservoir of landless men, forced to accept employment from capitalist enterprises, such as those of the white settlers, if they are to live. It is thus difficult to find labour for these enterprises. Various expedients have been used. First labour was found by slavery. Black men were kidnapped, brought to the spot, and sold to the settler, who forced them to work for him. Next, it was direct coercion : chiefs were ordered to find the necessary number of men, and the men were forced under

heavy penalties to remain at work in the place to which their rulers sent them. They would receive some small wage for their services, and perhaps the chief would be paid as well. Both of the methods were fairly effective. If the quality of the labour was poor, it was at least plentiful ; and the rather distasteful and demoralizing task of coercing unwilling labourers could be delegated for the most part to subordinates. But the European conscience revolted at length, in succession, against each of these two expedients, and other means had to be found. The resulting policy, which is widely prevalent at the present time, may be described as one of indirect coercion. A certain amount of pressure is still applied to chiefs, though always falling short of anything which could be construed as an order ; and this "moral suasion" is often effective. It is not, however, exclusively relied upon. The root difficulty, as we have seen, lies in the economic situation of the native population, and its permanent solution is therefore only to be found in that region. If the economic needs of the native could be increased or his economic resources diminished, or both, to a sufficient extent, he would be obliged, as the ordinary European is obliged, to volunteer for outside employment. On the side of need, the administration may see that, for instance, the practice of buying wives is encouraged, or that the desirability of wearing clothes is inculcated ; further, it will tax the native, and may even, as in Nyasaland, discriminate

between "idle" and "employed" natives by demanding from those employed by Europeans only half the amount paid by the rest. In these ways the life of the native is made more expensive to an extent which the archaic methods of production customary in his village communities do not enable him to face. As to resources, the native's chief economic resource is unlimited land. It is a simple expedient for the administration to appropriate all unoccupied land, giving the natives a title, more or less secure, only to such land as they already occupy. The most fertile portions of this land can then be sold or leased to European settlers; and in a shorter or longer period of time the natural increase of the native population, less thinned now than ever before by wars and epidemics, must result in the creation of a large and growing landless surplus. When that time comes, a cheap and plentiful supply of labour will be assured. Men will be driven out of the African, as they have been out of the European, villages by shortage of land.

By such methods of indirect coercion, more or less openly applied, labour is usually made available for British enterprise. Sometimes, however, when all has been done, it is not forthcoming; either quantity or quality, or both, are unsatisfactory. In that case the usual expedient is to import labour from India, China, or elsewhere. The labourers are recruited on some approved form of contract or indenture, and work under condi-

tions authorized and enforced by the government of the country in which the work is carried out. So, after the South African war, Chinese were imported into the new colony to work the mines, during the shortage of native labour, and so at the present day natives of Southern India are continually recruited for work on the plantations of Ceylon. The Chinese experiment was stigmatized during the general election of 1905 in a famous poster as slavery ; and the taunt was bitterly resented. It is very difficult, however, to prove that it was unjust. If a man is treated as merely so much " labour," as an instrument of production and no more, he is treated as a slave. The fact that he enlisted " voluntarily " (which means only that he was tricked instead of being forced into the service), that his engagement was for a limited period, and that he received pay for his work, is no proof to the contrary. What makes him a slave is the denial to him of all ordinary civil and social rights in the society for which he works. The Chinaman in Africa was a slave ; a slave indeed without a master, a member of a gang, the temporary property not of an individual but of a corporation : but such slavery is historically the worst of all. The Indian may, as a rule, secure better terms than the Chinaman was given ; but he, too, is a slave where he works, if he is denied the elementary civil and social rights. We will assume for the sake of argument that some form of contract is necessary, and that its terms and conditions

are generally just and humane. He will still not cease to be a slave until he is granted freedom of movement and the right of trading in the community to which he comes, and, when he shall have fulfilled his contract, the opportunity of permanently settling in it. No community is justified in using the labour of men to whom it denies membership. A democratic State might decide to refuse admission altogether to certain races or classes of men: it would never risk its own safety and contradict its own principles by importing such men in large numbers and refusing them citizenship. If therefore additional labour is required in any colony for the development of its resources, the labourers should be brought in frankly as colonists and settlers.

As a rule, however, as we have said, the importation of labour from outside is not necessary. Indirect coercion triumphs: but not without difficulty and scandal, occasionally revealed to the public in the European press, and certainly not without disaster to native life. Not only are colonial governments insufficiently alive to the interests of the native employees and culpably inactive in the matter of securing decent conditions of employment, with the result that the labourers suffer in health and moral; not only are harsh and oppressive penal regulations enforced, creating a whole series of crimes which are punished with great severity; but the whole system is plainly contrary to the natives' true interests and opposed

to the democratic principle of self-government. By economic means the whole fabric of native custom is undermined and enfeebled, and the chances of a healthy natural development imperilled. "You were first *slaves*, then *serfs*," wrote Mazzini to the working men of Italy: "now you are *hirelings*." This system attempts to force, suddenly and arbitrarily, on the African native the status of hireling, in the interest of an alien civilization which has already succeeded in reducing the great mass of its citizens to that position. The attempt, if successful, means the destruction of the communal village life, based on the cultivation of the land, which affords the only environment in which these races at their present stage of development can be expected to thrive and make progress. We are now learning in our own country that democracy has a mission in the economic as well as in the political life, and that the status of a mere hireling is not one with which the European workman will long remain contented, great as are his privileges and compensations compared with the African. A similar extension of a political principle into the sphere of economics is all that is needed to give the lines of a true democratic solution of the problem of capital and labour in our Crown Colonies and Protectorates.

The democratic principle of self-government has, as we have seen, an application even to the most backward races, in that alien control and co-ordination may be so super-imposed upon existing

native forms of social organization as not to distort or pervert them but leave them free to develop on natural lines. In this way, we suggested, even under the autocratic rule of a conquering power, the essentials of self-government may be preserved. The same principle may be applied, with the like result, in regard to native forms of economic organization, however rudimentary they may be. The economic activities are not the whole of life, nor are they man's highest activities, but they are the basis of all others ; and, unless they run on natural and healthy lines, there is little chance that the rest of life will be sound and vigorous. Economic life is the basis of all life, and economic welfare is the basis of all welfare. The less developed a race is, the less numerous and absorbing are its non-economic interests ; the more complete therefore is its dependence on the economic basis. Thus the productive organization of a barbarous tribe, crude as it may appear to us, is nevertheless as an element in life precious and irreplaceable to the individual member of the tribe, as the endless ingenuities and complexities of the modern business world can never be to the member of a civilised European community. So far as economics are concerned, the European can shed his civilization in a moment and live as a savage ; but the savage cannot shed his savagery. If the methods of production to which he is accustomed are destroyed, the whole fabric of his life is destroyed with it. It is even more necessary,

therefore, to preserve native forms in economic than in political organization.

If native life is to be preserved, the first necessity is that the native shall remain on the land and in his villages. The land, therefore, must everywhere be regarded as the inalienable property of the native communities, held, where not occupied, in trust for them by the colonizing power, and administered exclusively in their interest. The administration will find it necessary to appropriate portions of the land, on which to construct roads, railways, and other works of public utility ; but, even though this will often involve the ejection of native villages from their holdings, no injustice is inflicted on the natives, if these works themselves make for their prosperity and are similarly regarded as property held in trust for them. No permanent alienation of land to European settlers either by the natives or by the colonial government should be allowed. All grants of land to Europeans should take the form of short-time renewable leases with revisable rents, and the maximum holding should be strictly limited. In this way the growth of large plantations, requiring gangs of labourers collected from a distance, will be effectively prevented. On the side of production the first care of the administration will be the stimulation and improvement of village industries. Our own colonial experiments in West Africa have shown that, properly guided, the native village communities are quite competent to organize the

production and collection of several of the most valuable tropical products required by European industry. The vastly superior productivity of the colonies in which these methods are in force cannot be supposed to be solely due to superior fertility and more favourable conditions generally ; it must be due, in part at least, to more willing and effective labour, supplied in a form consistent with native usage and habits of life. The native is employed, not directly, as an individual, but indirectly, as a member of a community. If all the produce required from our colonies can be procured in this way through the village communities, the problem is in principle solved. The demands of industry are satisfied in a manner which not only leaves native life undamaged, but may even contribute to its healthy development. Even if some forms of production must for the present be entrusted directly to European settlers, it is probable that no great harm will accrue if the growth of large estates, which require for their working what practically amounts to slave-labour, is prevented.

We have now, perhaps, said sufficient to outline the general economic policy which results from the application of the principles of self-government to the problem of production in colonies inhabited by undeveloped races. This particular imperial question requires special emphasis, because these races are for the most part unable to speak for themselves, and our conduct towards them is

therefore the best test of the genuineness of our profession to govern in the interest of the governed. The European settler and the capitalist interests behind him are far more vocal ; and their needs and wishes are far better understood, not only by home politicians, but also in most cases by the colonial administrators. In addition to this, the question is important because it reveals in its most naked form a danger to which all Empire is liable, wherever it exists and whatever the degree of civilization of the conquered population may be. Imperial possessions are always regarded by the governing people as a promising field for the investment of capital, and the provision of capital for their development is reasonably represented as a patriotic duty. England has occasionally entrusted the administration of vast areas of territory to commercial undertakings under special charters. An existing case is the British South Africa Company, which is responsible to the Imperial government for the administration of Rhodesia ; and in the past there is the famous instance of the East India Company, which created our Indian Empire and only expired in 1858. Now, if one thing is plainer than another, both from the teaching of experience and from considerations above adduced, it is this, that every application of European capital to colonial possessions needs to be most carefully watched and safeguarded if the interests of the natives are not to be sacrificed at every turn to the cupidity of the shareholders

It is therefore an indefensible abuse of power to put the administration of any inhabited area in the hands of a company formed for profit, however carefully its charter may be framed. To do so is to confess openly that the colony is regarded as a source of profit and nothing more. The most that can be expected from the company is that it will try to avoid harming the natives ; it is not likely to undertake unremunerative expenditure for their direct benefit. The interest of the natives is bound to come last instead of first with the administration, and at every critical point is bound to suffer. When the Imperial government finally decides itself to undertake the administration of the country, not only will it be obliged to buy from the Company at their full value railways and other works of public utility, for which, in all probability, the natives have already paid many times over, but also it will be compelled immediately to disburse millions to repair the neglect and injustice of the preceding administration.

But administration by a Chartered Company is, as we have already suggested, only an undisguised form of a world-wide tendency of Imperial rule. It is the frank exploitation of a conquered population by the capital of the conquering nation. The subject people is recognized only as a source of profit to the conqueror. Democracy requires at the very least that the interests of the inhabitants of any country shall come first with its government. Empire is only tolerable if this requirement is

everywhere satisfied within it. Therefore, in addition to demanding that native forms of government and industry shall be utilized and developed wherever possible, democracy will be bound to insist on the strictest control of all capitalist ventures in its subject territories.

Finally, competition between nations for colonial possessions will never cease to be a cause of international bickering until the principles of Free Trade and the Open Door are honestly and wholeheartedly adopted by all colonizing Powers as the basis of their administration of all territories under their rule which are not self-governing. Any nation which attempts to make the economic exploitation of territory in Africa or elsewhere the privilege of its own European subjects, or which refuses to allow to the industry of other nations the same facilities for access to the raw materials produced which it offers to its own, is making empire a coveted monopoly, a share in which may reasonably be considered important to any industrial nation, and this re-creating to the best of its power one of the main features of the situation which led to the war of 1914 and the armed peace which preceded it. Such an attempt would be a sad retrogression on the part of the British, who are historically identified with a policy of Free Trade, and would be particularly impolitic as coming from them, since so large a proportion of the undeveloped wealth of the world is under their administration, offering so large a target for the envy and ambition

of less fortunate nations. It is, therefore, not enough that these territories should be administered politically and economically, for the benefit of their inhabitants. It is essential, further, that such economic profit as may arise from their occupation shall be shared on equal terms with the whole world.

III. FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—The sphere of foreign affairs is all dealings between nation and nation. The task before us is therefore to discover the distinctive marks or principles, if there are any, which are likely to characterize a genuinely democratic government in its conduct towards other governments and peoples, legally its equals.

We are met at the outset by a sceptical doubt, the solution of which is essential to the consideration of the question. It is still widely held that a nation has no objects or obligations outside itself at all ; that its efforts are and should be completely self-centred, all alike directed solely to its own aggrandisement and improvement. Other nations exist no doubt, and it is impossible not to have dealings with them ; but in the eye of a statesman they exist only to minister to the greatness of the country whose servant he is. He may at times claim, with apparent truth, that he is doing another nation a service ; but it is in reality only a commercial deal, by which he hopes to make a profit for his country. If a critic hints that he gave away something for nothing, or that he lost on the exchange, the hint will be indignantly repudi-

ated as equivalent to a charge of treason. The statesman is a patriot ; that is to say, he seeks the welfare of his country. Either he has no duty to humanity at large, or, to state the same truth in a form which to some will seem less offensive, his sole duty to humanity is to strive to make his own country great. If this view is true, it follows that foreign policy is what Mazzini called " collective egoism," and that talk of national unselfishness is humbug ; that all that part of morality which is shown in generosity, friendly aid, self-denial for the sake of others, and the like, has no application to the life and actions of nations. It follows that nations associate only on the plane of the economic motive, each seeking to get what it can, and controlled in the seeking at most by a certain rudimentary honesty of fidelity to promises. There is no real society of nations, held together by the recognition of rights and the acceptance of duties, since nations are always in rivalry and competition with one another. War is very obviously what Clausewitz called it, the continuance of policy, since it is only the attempt to get by violence advantages which diplomacy is all the time trying to secure by the trickery of words.

This sceptical view of international relations has a long history, and can claim the support, total or partial, of many of the most distinguished writers and thinkers of early modern times, though it is not always clear whether they put it forward as their account of what such relations must be or

merely of what they are. Contemporary scepticism is less confident, and has more opposition to face ; but even in the modern England of the present day the view still has its champions in the Press and elsewhere. The *Morning Post* and the *National Review* are its most accomplished and consistent exponents. It is a fact not without significance to our argument that the view is current mainly in circles avowedly opposed to democracy. It is true that there is a certain cynical type of Socialism, more common on the Continent than in England, which leans strongly towards it ; but then it is precisely this section of socialist opinion whose loyalty to democracy is most doubtful. Here, as often, there is a certain sympathy between the extreme right and the extreme left. The two unite in ridicule of the pious professions of the practical statesman and the working politician, who choose to cover national self-seeking under a cloak of fine phrases, and cling tenaciously in words to an ideal of co-operation between nations in the cause of civilization to which every fact and their own actions daily give the lie. Their verbal homage to this ideal is represented as mere sentimentalism or hypocrisy ; of a piece with their pretended trust in the voice of the people. The people has no voice ; and, if it had, why should a wise man follow it ? And a nation has no rights, beyond what it can win and keep by its own strength, and no duties, except to prevail in the world-struggle.

We have in the west a group of nations, differing in size, wealth and imperial achievement, but fairly uniform in their collective needs and habits of life, and closely inter-connected by mutual intercourse in trade, learning, literature and the arts. To say that this group of nations has no common interests is wanton paradox, and to maintain that its common interests are not better served by co-operation than by competition between the nations which compose it is to defend an impossible thesis. In such a group community of interest is an undeniable fact ; and, though no common organization may exist, some degree of co-operation is a bare necessity. If every member of the group chooses to pursue a purely selfish line of action, attending to the common good only so far as it happens to coincide with its own immediate good, the common welfare of the group will in the main be neglected and will suffer in proportion. If one member of the group chooses to stand aside from a policy of common action and consultation which is accepted by the rest, possibly the common welfare will not greatly suffer ; but the recalcitrant member will in effect be relying on and profiting from the fact that its more public-spirited fellows are willing to undertake the whole of the work in which it ought to be bearing its fair share. How far either of these hypotheses fitted the community of nations before the world-war, or will fit it during the era of liquidation or reconstruction on which we are now entering, it is very

difficult to say. What is certain, however, is that already before the war co-operation between nations was already a fact and not a mere dream. Friendly arrangements between governments as to shipping, merchandize, copyright, international posts and telegraphs, and a hundred and one other matters of varying importance, had already supplemented and facilitated the friendly intercourse of individuals. By many of these international agreements the separate nations, as nations, had no private end to serve at all, except so far as in making them they were satisfying a popular demand. What was really happening, under the eyes and with the aid of statesmen who were unaware of the significance of their own acts, was that the citizens of the various countries were busily and fruitfully occupied in building a community wider than the nation. The life of the citizen overflowed the limits of the nation-state, and international agreements did but record and register the fact in the most obvious and convenient fashion. Society is not made by laws and agreements between its members; laws and agreements are a subsequent and in many respects a defective statement of the form which society has chosen to assume. International agreements are thus a proof of the existence of a community of nations, and some evidence as to its character. They show the theory that nations associate only as rivals and competitors to be a mere myth. Between competitors, as such, there are no agreements. Even agreement, there-

fore, as to the terms and limits of competition refutes the theory ; and co-operation between nations for the advancement of art or science presupposes an existing community of which each is a member, and in which, at least in part, competition is definitely superseded by another relation.

If, then, there is competition between civilized nations, there is also co-operation. Even without the League of Nations the society of nations was not a mere dream, since all mutual relations between them, other than mere enmity, involve the tacit recognition of its existence. But if the fact of international society is accepted, the fact of international obligation, that is, of national morality and immorality in foreign affairs, must also be admitted. It was just because they refused to recognise the existence of a society of nations that earlier thinkers denied the existence of international morality. We have already given reasons for the belief that such a society existed before ; but it is now formally authorized, and its terms and conditions explicitly set out (whether adequately or not) in the Covenant which constitutes the League of Nations. The reason given therefore is refuted, and, until another more cogent is found, we are entitled to reverse the conclusion and assume that common sense is justified in supposing that the language of statesmen is not mere affectation, and that nations may behave well or ill in their dealings with one another, and may be called good and bad in respect of their

actions. The social obligations of nations, we may assume, are in principle the same as those of individuals. It is wrong to treat others as merely a means to your own private advantage. Society requires that its members shall each recognize all the others as equally entitled to exist in their own place and function, each taking his proper share in the common work, and giving and receiving friendly help in more personal concerns. These are the elementary requisites of association, the rules of decent behaviour, and must be taken to apply to nations, as to individuals, in society. A man will be blamed so far as his conduct does not accord with them ; but he cannot claim positive merit for compliance. He has merely fulfilled the law. Many go further : they do more than their share of the common labour, or they go out of their way to help their fellows at some sacrifice to themselves. As showing a degree of public spirit and private generosity beyond what is ordinary and obligatory, such actions are entitled to the praise which they receive, and are rightly taken as evidence of a positive goodness of character. The action of a nation, it must be supposed, might be entitled to similar commendation. If so, a nation is capable, in its dealings with other nations, not merely of respecting the ordinary moral restraints, but also of showing generosity and some degree of moral heroism.

It has been the view of believers in democracy, practically without exception, that these conclu-

sions are sound, that those moral distinctions which are applied to the actions of individuals are equally applicable to the actions of nations. The implied refusal to accept the national boundary as final and absolute, and the belief in the over-riding obligation of a wider community, though not confined to them, is yet peculiarly characteristic of the democratic thinkers of the nineteenth century. The reason for this must be found in a fundamental divergence between democratic and anti-democratic theory. In the absence of conclusive proof to the contrary, the democrat tends to interpret all acts done in the name of a nation by its rulers or representatives as expressions of the nation's will. Now it is certain that moral distinctions are all ultimately to be attached to will, and to will only. In other words, nothing but a will is morally good, or morally bad. It is therefore natural for a democrat to hold that nations show goodness or badness in their actions ; and their opponents, who hold that the notion of national will or action is nonsense, are entitled to draw the logical conclusion that a nation cannot show itself good or bad. To them a statesman is a kind of trustee for the nation, entitled for the moment to employ resources which are not his own, and expected to employ them for the good of those in whose interest the trust was created. It is not for him to be generous with other people's money. His business is to develop the estate to the best effect he can. In dealing with other nations he is subject to no

laws, and the interest of his country reigns paramount and unquestioned. He is not acting selfishly or immorally ; he is doing his best for others, whose trustee he is ; and the nation, being *ex hypothesi* incapable of judging or deciding, is not acting at all. This position is partly destroyed if it is admitted that a nation is a member of a wider community, and, as such, amenable to laws and restraints in its dealings with other nations, which are as real and binding as the laws of the land, though less precise and comprehensive. But, if the rest of the analysis is left standing, it would follow that the moral judgment, which is now admitted to be legitimate, applies to the statesman, not to the nation which he represents, since the act and will is his, not theirs.

The question is : Are we justified in holding a people responsible for the actions of its rulers, done in that capacity ? If we hold the people responsible, we judge in effect that the action was its action and expressed its will. It is evident that there is only ground for doubt as to the answer so far as nations are not democratically organized. For the aim of democracy is, as we have seen, to establish this very responsibility beyond question. So far as democracy is not realized, a genuine doubt remains. There is an extreme case, that of a subject people autocratically governed by an Imperial power, in which complete irresponsibility must be admitted ; the subject, in this case, cannot be considered to contribute at all to the act

of its ruler. But there is no other kind of government in which the element of democracy is entirely absent. It may be difficult or even impossible to say with confidence in any given case in what degree democracy is present. It is none the less certain that only so far as it is present is a people justly held responsible for the actions done in its name. Quite apart from any question of forms of government, it seems to be in fact generally assumed that in the modern nation-state the greatest single factor in any important political decision is the opinion and wishes of the mass of the people. We have been told repeatedly that Germany's choice of war in August, 1914, was the act of a militarist autocracy. But those who say this do not, as a rule, draw the conclusion that the whole responsibility for its results lies with the soldiers and officials, and that the people as a whole deserves no punishment. Rightly or wrongly, they consider that the German government could not have acted on that scale and with that efficiency without the active concurrence of the governed, who were therefore guilty with it of whatever wrong was done. They count, in short, on the effective presence of a democratic element in German politics. When President Wilson interpreted the war quite simply as a war of democracies against autocracies, he was applauded. But when he drew the obvious conclusion that the peoples of enemy countries were not guilty and must not be punished, he was ignored. In truth, not only was

the conclusion inconvenient, but the main premise was unsound. Germany was not to that extent autocratically governed. It is thus plain that, while the final realization of democracy would make the full application of moral distinctions to international relations justifiable beyond dispute, the absence of democratic forms of government is not accepted as wholly exempting a people from responsibility for the acts of its rulers. The moral judgment is still applied, and with justice, in our view, so far as democratic control is a fact. And in no modern nation-state can it be supposed to be entirely absent in any decision to the significance of which the general public is awake.

The reason why anti-democratic theory goes commonly hand in hand with a denial of international obligation is now obvious. It is hardly too much to say that it is democracy which makes international morality possible. The evidence of history lends support to this view, inasmuch as the rise of democracy has in fact coincided with a perceptible improvement in standards of behaviour as between nations. The same period, however, has witnessed the growth of other ideals, in particular of certain forms of nationalism and imperialism, which seem to many to be false in themselves and pernicious in their results, and which have been by no means wholly disavowed by democratic movements. Nationalism has taken a form in which it breathes new life into the old heresy that a people has no duty more holy than

its own aggrandisement, and imperialism turns foreign policy into a scramble between nations for markets and concessions, for monopolies of trade and economic enterprise among the less civilised peoples of the earth. Both alike appeal to patriotism, which they exalt as the sovereign obligation of the citizen and the supreme guiding principle of national policy. With imperialism we need not here concern ourselves. We have already tried to show that empire, so far as it means the imposition of one community's will upon another, is inconsistent with democratic principles ; and, in theory at least, the opposition between democracy and imperialism is well understood. With nationalism the case is very different. It has seemed sometimes to be the natural consort of democracy, and in Mazzini's glowing pages the two ideals were preached with a fervour and coherence which is still unsurpassed. Some criticism is therefore due from us of the nationalist idea as an influence upon the foreign policy of the democratic State.

Nationalism is the name given to the theory that civilized society falls naturally into certain large homogeneous groups called nations. A nation is a fact, a natural unit, to some extent independent of and antecedent to political organization. Though it may be difficult to say precisely on what national unity depends, since differences in race, in language, and in other vital factors are possible within the national group, it is essential to the theory that mere community of government is not of itself

sufficient. A State fails to be a nation, where the bond of unity is merely political ; and a nation may exist which possesses no political organs of its own, and thus fails to be a State. So Mazzini could speak of a Polish or Italian nation, though Europe in his day recognised no Polish or Italian State ; and so the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was always denied by common consent the name of nation. Switzerland offers an interesting instance, in which a real unity seems to have been created by political necessities and external pressure, in spite of the conspicuous absence of unity of race, language, or religion. But to admit the existence of a Swiss nationality is to assert that the population is now held together by bonds which are not merely political. The conception of the nation thus provides a justification for political divisions where the boundaries between States are correctly drawn, and a challenge to political divisions where the boundaries are drawn incorrectly. It gives us an ideal of a world in which every state is a nation and every nation a state, in which, that is, the political divisions correspond to the natural divisions of the population. While it affords a pretext for secession and for the transfer of districts, large or small, from one allegiance to another, it suggests at the same time a possibility of finality in such rearrangements. Finally, where it accepts the national character of a State, it reinforces patriotism, as teaching the citizen that

the State, which claims his service, has no merely legal title to his devotion.

So far as the nationalist ideal demands that the boundaries of governments shall be determined by the permanent interests and affinities of the population concerned, rather than by military force, dynastic interests, and the fancies and prejudices of rulers, it is logically complementary to democracy. It applies to the formation of political societies the same principle which democracy applies to their organized life. So far, again, as it insists that there are fruitful differences of custom and tradition in the world, which are best expressed for the general comfort and advantage of humanity, in the organization of independent nation-states, it is asserting a fact which in our present state of political development is of primary importance ; and again it is in fundamental sympathy with democracy. That the recognition of these principles may involve us in difficulties in Ireland or India, or in international complications on the continent of Europe is no good reason against giving them their due weight in foreign and internal policy. A nationalist foreign policy in this sense would be a policy of active sympathy with other nations, and would necessarily involve the notion of a society of nations based on equality. This was the nationalism of Mazzini, who was able to claim that nationalism involved internationalism and found its logical consummation in some such organization as we have recently attempted to

found in the League of Nations. He was therefore consistent in advocating as the main principle of foreign policy the maxim: "Never deny your sister nations." The negative form of his maxim gives it a certain air of modesty, which is not out of place. For, however carefully it is interpreted, the nationalist ideal will not solve many problems of foreign policy. It is the plain fact that national groups, of convenient size and geographical distribution, do not everywhere lie ready to hand on the continent of Europe. Distinct stocks, bitterly opposed and living in almost continuous warfare with one another, are perplexingly intermixed in the Balkan peninsula; and nearer home, as in Ireland and Alsace-Lorraine, there are cases of divided allegiance not much less critical. In such cases it may be necessary to try to create by political means a unity which does not exist, or to trust an existing State, which cannot claim the sanction of nationality, to overcome in course of time its own internal divisions. Nationalism, therefore, may well be found to be of little assistance in many of the most urgent practical problems of foreign policy. Nevertheless, when all due reservations have been made, Mazzini's ideal of nationalist democracy has a permanent value. Democracy would be untrue to itself if its foreign policy were not nationalist in his sense.

The idealism of Mazzini, however, must not blind us to the fact that nationalism has in practice too often been the cover for much questionable

and demoralizing propaganda. Memories of Palmerston and Napoleon III, of Empire Days and Sedanfeiers will be stirred up to confute our optimism. We shall be told that, whatever theorists may say, this is what nationalism really means, a tendency productive of every mischief and destructive of the moral sense of nations. But though the facts look awkward, and might be made with a little trouble to look more awkward still, the answer is simple. Palmerston and Napoleon attitudinized, Empire Day and Sedanfeier were organized, in the interest of a nationalism which was intended for internal consumption. Their nationalism is in the main a feature of internal policy. The attempt is to raise national feeling within one's own borders to fever-heat in order to strengthen the hand of the government and to terrify one's neighbours. It is true that Mazzini preached nationalism to Italians ; but he pleaded for Poland as well as for Italy, and besides, Italy was not then a political unit. As soon as a nation has found the political unity which it seeks, its own nationality is powerless to provide a principle of action. The only possible suggestion is that the nation should continue to be itself, which, if it had any practical effect, could only result in a self-consciousness damaging to all action alike. It was similarly suggested to Peer Gynt by the Button-moulder in Ibsen's play that he might have found salvation by " being himself " ; but he was none the wiser, nor are we. No man

wants to be simply what he is ; and in order to be anything at all he must have some object outside himself. In the same way, a nation cannot live on its own nationality, and has no need to trouble about it at all when once it has found its proper means of political expression. It is nationality as a fact in the world outside which should inspire action. This is apparent from what has already been said. To prevent mistakes, however, Democracy might well take the precaution of distinguishing its own nationalism as "for external application only."

Men are held together by many ties, some of which cross national frontiers ; and most of them are to some extent voluntarily accepted or created by the individual. There are the ties of the family, into which they were born and which they help to enlarge, personal ties of friendship and affection, ties political and religious, common ties binding them to their fellows of the craft or hobby, study or profession, ties attaching them to the soil on which they dwell and to the various communities and institutions in which they have lived and worked. Each of these ties presses its own claim of service and loyalty upon the individual, and it is for him to adjust their claims as he best may. The national claim is but one among these competing liabilities, not by any means the most engrossing and persistent, but perhaps the least voluntary in origin and the most difficult to escape in its application. Its willing recognition is called

patriotism ; but to a great extent national service is compulsory. The individual is not left to decide how much he shall pay towards his country's expense, nor even whether he shall fight in its armies against those of enemy nations. He is required to obey. Change of nationality is allowed under certain restrictions ; but it is a risky step, involving the rupture of many other ties ; and there is no escaping national obligations altogether. The nation-state is a compelling fact in modern society, all-pervading and almost all-powerful. It may be suspected that this predominance of the national unity over all others, or at least over all other unities based on locality, is a transient phase of human social development. The nation may be destined, not exactly to be superseded, but at least to lose its disproportionate eminence by attack from two directions. On the one hand, it is threatened, as the Greek City was threatened, by a wider organization, which is already taking concrete form in the League of Nations. On the other hand, there are signs that the nation-state is in many cases too large for the effective administration of all the manifold departments of modern government. If the fear of a European War is successfully removed, the most powerful motive to centralization and to the enlargement of the area of government will be destroyed ; and a reverse movement of division and decentralization may be expected to set in. Historians have good reason to point to the solid achievements of the

national organization in the nineteenth century, and probably have the best of the argument with pessimistic critics who see nothing but its follies and failures. Nevertheless it seems evident that recent times have witnessed an exaggeration of the national tie at the expense of all others, which is transitory, and incidental to a certain stage of development. The inflammation is perhaps already dying down, and, in the West of Europe, at least, where the process of development is most advanced, will probably find no occasion for recurrence. The Nation is neither dead nor dying, but it is losing its monopoly of patriotism, and ready to make room for the lesser and the larger unity.

We have already seen that the spirit of Democracy is hostile to the mutual exclusiveness of nations and to the attempt to make the national barrier absolute. The chief hope, indeed, of a more real society of nations rests on the general realization of a fuller democracy. We have seen also that democracy is friendly to nationality as the basis and inspiration of political organization. The wider community is to be, certainly, a society of *nations*, even though it is not merely that. So far as nationality has been made to contribute to jingoism and imperialist aggression, this has been due to tendencies and activities either directly hostile or at least unsympathetic to democracy. The international tie has been denied or neglected ; national feeling within the state has been artificially excited ; military strength has been sought

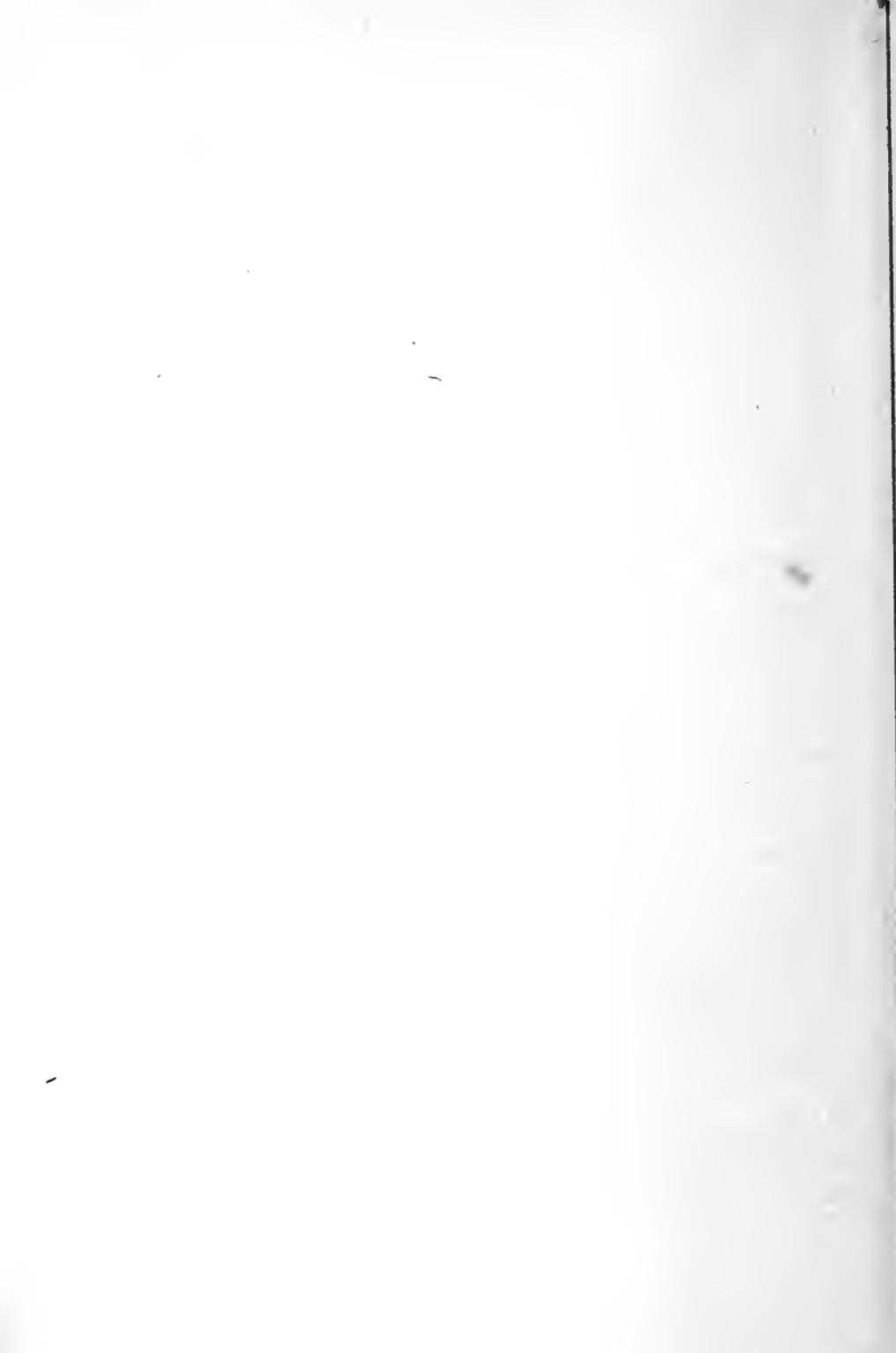
by accessions of territory and over-centralization of government. The general realization of democracy within a wider super-national organization, such as we are now promised, will go far to restrict and annul these perversions of national sentiment, and will thus set nationality free to play a valuable and necessary, though perhaps less showy, part in the evolution of human society. A foreign policy of open dealing, based on the friendly co-operation of nations for the common advantage, will at last be possible. Co-operation is involved in the very notion of society ; and democracy necessitates openness of dealing, since an act cannot be national of which the nation is ignorant.

We have now completed our account of democracy by a survey of the three main departments of government. It was observed at the outset that in imperial and foreign affairs the competence to democracy is rather generally mistrusted, while in internal affairs it is admitted that it has its uses. Competence, of course, cannot be proved except by trial ; and no modern state has yet made the experiment of democratic control in foreign and imperial affairs. But if these departments have in the past been less democratic than the others, for that very reason the full realization of democracy, if democracy remained true to itself, would have in them the most revolutionary effect. And if democracy could finally discredit empire as an ideal and make it tolerable as a fact ; if it could end the era of wars and alliances, of secret and dis-

honourable bargains and internecine rivalries between nations, and replace it by mutual consideration and co-operation, it would have effected a most happy and glorious revolution. But, however firmly one may believe that such are logically the fruits of the democratic principle, it is impossible to guarantee that democracies will in fact so behave. A democratic country, like any other, may and will do wrong. One can perhaps show that democracy, so far as it is effective, makes certain kinds of intrigue impossible and others difficult or improbable ; but forms of government alone will not ensure that it remains effective. A democratic country will allow its representatives within certain limits to forego democracy. And that is perhaps the greatest practical obstacle to democratic control of foreign and imperial affairs. The people for the most part do not care and are not interested : they will not attend. These matters are therefore left to the unfettered judgment of Ministers and Parliament ; and democracy is confined once more to internal affairs. The remedy is mainly with the members of Parliament and with the political parties. If they allow any department of government to be placed "outside party," so that questions relevant to it have practically no place in party programmes and election speeches, they encourage inattention on the part of the electorate, and deprive the people, in effect, of any power to control policy in that department. The authority of Parliament itself

suffers in consequence. There are departments of government with which members are not accustomed, and therefore not competent, to deal. Consequently the control of policy falls to experts and interested parties, to the man on the spot, to the Foreign and Colonial offices, to large financial and commercial undertakings with axes to grind, while the Prime Minister and the Cabinet find it more and more difficult and inadvisable to interfere. The final conclusion is the irresponsible rule of officials, or bureaucracy. This process towards bureaucracy in foreign and imperial matters, which, owing to the pressure of domestic problems, was much accentuated in the Liberal governments of the years 1906-1914, could have been checked at any time by the enterprise of a sufficient number of private members of Parliament, and could be undone now in a few months by an active party which was determined to make democracy effective over the whole range of national affairs. A foreign or imperial policy which is above party is a policy which is afraid of publicity, and therefore hostile to democracy ; and in removing these matters, through laziness, dishonesty, or a mistaken desire for continuity, from the control of the electorate, it effectively exempts them from the control of Parliament. But no matter within the competence of Parliament can be taken out of its hands except by its negligence or with its consent. We are thus brought back to the relation of the elected member to his constituency, and to the part played by

party in formulating the issues on which a decision is required and so enabling the electorate to exercise a decisive influence upon policy. Upon the correct functioning of these two portions of the machinery, above all others, under our representative system, democracy depends for its existence. It is not to be expected, and it may even be doubted whether it is desirable, that foreign and colonial problems should engage public opinion so intensely as domestic issues. Only occasionally would they provide the main issue of an election. There is no reason, however, why they should not receive continuous attention from the Parliament and from the people ; and if that were so there would be some ground for hope that foreign and imperial policy would cease to contradict principles accepted as axiomatic by all parties in home affairs, and become by degrees fit expressions of the democratic idea. The free co-operation of citizens in the democratic State would then produce, as its natural complement, the friendly co-operation of nations for the advancement of civilization and for the protection of more backward races from economic exploitation.



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A Critical Examination

BY

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Among the many schemes of re-construction Political, Social and Industrial which have been put forward, that advocated under the name of Guild Socialism, or recently the National Guild System, occupies perhaps the most prominent place. There has, however, been little in the way of detailed criticism of this scheme by anyone who does not agree with it, and it is, therefore, all the more necessary that those who are unable to accept the particular doctrines should think out, and state clearly, what are the defects they find in this alleged Social panacea.

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